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THE
LIGHT DRAGOON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE SUBALTERN," "CHELSEA PENSIONERS,"
"THE HUSSAR," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
LIGHT DRAGOON.

CHAPTER I.

Set out for England—Adventures by the Way—Embark at Helvoetsluys—Harwich—Sailors' Fun—March for London.

THERE is something very sad in the contemplation of such a total wreck as had by this time overtaken the French armies, however merited the downfall of the discomfited may be; and there occurred a little incident which sufficiently proved that the inhabitants of Dusseldorf at least were not insen-

sible to the feeling. After the last of the boats had been carried across the river, about five-and-twenty invalid French soldiers, whom their comrades had overlooked, and who remained in one of the hospitals, discovered that they had been abandoned, and, rushing out into the streets, exhibited amid their weakness, the most distressing symptoms of despair. They ran to the water's edge, adjured their countrymen to save them, and, in several instances, made an effort to throw themselves into the river. The citizens looked on with great compassion for a while, after which they took the poor fellows to their homes, and, hiding them in places where they had at least a chance of escaping observation, they fed and nursed them there with great tenderness. I am glad that it is in my power to add, that the humanity of the Dusseldorfers was not wasted. The invalids contrived to elude the notice both of Russians and Prussians; and,

being supplied with money and other necessities for the journey, were, on the recovery of their strength, sent home to their own country.

It was on the 13th of November, 1813, that the last of the French army passed the Rhine; and the same day, about noon, I learned from some countrymen whom I met in a wine-house, that bands of Cossacks were hovering about in the fields, at no great distance. Now, we had not been taught to think too highly either of the self-denial or the honesty of the Cossacks; and I confess that the intelligence rendered me very uneasy, on account of my mistress and the female domestics of the family. I therefore hurried home, warned my poor mistress—whose husband had gone from home—of the danger that menaced, and gave her all the aid which I could furnish, in guarding against it. The first thing done, was to direct the cook to have an abundant supply

of provisions ready: the next, to get up from the cellars wine and spirits, enough to cheer the hearts of half a regiment. After this, I persuaded the baroness to retreat with her children and nurses up stairs into one of the bedrooms, and to barricade the door on the inside, so as to hinder it from being easily opened. Then, having seen matters arranged, as far as circumstances would allow, I strolled out, partly to ascertain how far danger really threatened, partly to gratify the sort of nervous curiosity by which all men, so situated, are apt to be affected.

It was night when I entered the streets, throughout the whole compass of which not a living thing showed itself. The shops were all closed, every window was dark, and not so much as the stroke of a hammer broke in upon the deathlike silence. I wandered on and on, seeing nothing, and hearing nothing, except the clank of my own footsteps on the pavement. At last I turned

towards a public-house, which I had been in the habit of frequenting; and finding the door shut, I knocked. For a considerable space no notice was taken of the signal; but I knocked again and again; and in the end, the sound of the bolt withdrawn from its socket reached me. By-and-by the door creaked on its hinges, and mine host stood in the very narrow aperture, holding a candle in his hand, by the flame of which I could perceive that he was pale as ashes. "What's the matter, Boniface?" cried I; "has any thing happened?" "Oh, nothing at all," replied he, drawing a deep breath; "I only thought it might be the Cossacks." From this I learned, that the arrival of these people was momentarily expected; so, having drunk a glass of wine, and conversed for a few moments with mine host, I hurried home.

It might be about nine o'clock when the first straggling party of Cossacks entered

Dusseldorf. Their advance was conducted with extreme caution; for they no sooner passed one gate, than they put their horses to the speed, and galloped helter-skelter through, emerging by the gate opposite. Having thus satisfied themselves that there was no garrison in the place, they returned to the gate through which they had first shown themselves, and there formed. They marched next to the market-place where they halted. But though the inhabitants, perceiving but a handful of men, ventured to come forth and invite them into their houses, not one of these wild and wary warriors would quit his station. They sat down, to be sure, to the tables which were soon spread for them in the open air, and ate and drank as savages are accustomed to do, who have long fasted. But though they vociferated their delight as often as a cry arose, "Long live the Emperor Alexander," they steadily refused to enter beneath a roof.

Throughout the whole of that night the Cossacks continued to receive, by twos and threes, a fresh accession of numbers. At first not more than twenty or thirty had entered the town; when day broke, about 200 occupied the square; and they were soon afterwards reinforced by about 500 Prussian lancers. These proceeded, without delay, to obtain billets upon the inhabitants; and taking quiet possession of the apartments that were allotted to them, they exhibited no disposition to molest or offer injury to their entertainers. The case was very different, when a few hours later a battalion of Russian infantry, with a regiment of horse, entered the town. They did not so much as go through the form of applying for billets; but spreading themselves through the town, they took possession by parties of whatever domiciles seemed to attract their notice, or hold out the prospect of agreeable quarters. Neither did they stop there.

Whole families were turned into the street: the grossest outrages perpetrated on the women: horses were put up in the very drawing-rooms, and the costliest articles of furniture broken up for firewood. As to the work of plunder, that went on without the smallest interruption, and no human being appeared to blush for it. Among others, our house was visited by two officers of cavalry and a troop of their men. They knocked furiously at the gate; and though I lost no time in opening it, they overwhelmed me with abuse because I had kept them waiting. They demanded quarters for themselves and a superior officer. I showed them into a couple of rooms in the lower story, where beds had been purposely prepared; and replied to their orders concerning dinner, that it should be forthcoming immediately. And thanks to the bravery of my countrywoman, the cook, who refused to retreat with the rest of the female servants,

and stood to her utensils all day, I was enabled, within ten minutes, to set before them a sumptuous meal.

The Russians expressed themselves both surprised and pleased at the rapidity with which their wants were supplied. They drank copiously, too, from a magnum of white Burgundy, which, having no good Rhenish in the house, I set before them as choice Markobruner, and desiring that tea might be ready in a couple of hours, they walked abroad. And now began my troubles with the men. So long as the officers continued on the spot, the privates bore themselves with some show of moderation; but moderation was now at an end. They clamoured for food, drink, every thing of which they fancied themselves in need, and made a rush to storm the kitchen, which the cook defended with great resolution. At last, however, by dint of expostulation and entreaty, I prevailed upon them to desist;

and a bountiful supply of black puddings and gin soon restored them to good humour.

Meanwhile, flying portions of these savages had wandered all over the house, trying every door, and entering every apartment to which they found access. Among others, they had twice or thrice lifted the latch of that behind which my mistress and her family lay; but finding it fastened, they did not burst through, very much to the relief of the parties within, who were wellnigh killed with terror. They were not, however, so delicate in their dealings with our horses: these they turned out of the stalls into the streets, putting their own under cover, and feeding them with our forage. In short, it was a day and a night of extreme anxiety even to me; of agony and terror to the rest. Nevertheless, it passed by with perhaps less of suffering than might fairly have been expected. And on the morrow,

my mistress, perceiving that no personal violence was likely to be offered to her, ventured to quit her place of refuge.

Her first step was to wait upon the officers, who chanced to be at breakfast, and to remonstrate with them against the treatment which her horses had received. They did not so much as rise when she entered the apartment; but asking with a sneer, whether she thought her horses, or those belonging to the Emperor, of greater worth, they told her, point blank, that things should remain as they were. She instantly withdrew, and burst into tears. But tears were of small avail in such a situation as that into which the fortune of war had brought her, and she was condemned in consequence, throughout a space of four whole days, to sustain as she best might, the wrongs and insults to which foreign soldiers subjected her.

During four whole days this state of things

continued, and Dusseldorf was the scene of indescribable misery. Each new hour brought an accession to the numbers of the troops that filled it, till by-and-by not fewer than 10,000 to 12,000 must have taken up their quarters there. As a matter of course, the inhabitants were expelled from one apartment after another, to make way for men and horses. The streets, also, were strewed with fragments of broken furniture, beds, chairs, curtains, cooking utensils; and the noise of revelry rose above sounds which told of outrage suffered and feelings lacerated. But the most curious figures in that strange scene were the Cossacks : for a Cossack accoutred for war, bears as little resemblance to a human being as it is possible to conceive. His attire consists of an accumulation of rags of all sorts fastened about his trunk and limbs, with ropes or bands of straw: his cloak is not unfrequently a bear-skin, with a hole cut in order to let his head pass through ; over

which again is drawn a red woollen night-cap, so closely, as to leave no part of his countenance visible except the small piercing red eyes, or the sharp cheek-bones. Moreover, the Cossack is so enveloped in swaddling-clothes, that each limb appears as thick as an ordinary man's waist, and each waist like a goodly pollarded oak. As to his arms and appointments, these consist always of a lance, long and stout, and headed with steel; often of a bow and a quiver full of arrows, as well as of pistols stuck in profusion round his body. His horse again is as rough as a polar bear, small of stature, yet exceedingly hardy; and as to the saddle, according to the height of that, you may judge of each man's personal wealth. For a Cossack never stuffs his plunder any where but in the croup of his saddle, which, as he is a capital forager, grows higher and higher, till, towards the end of the campaign, its shape is portentous. Finally, a Cossack

never undresses till the campaign has ended, nor thinks of sleeping in a bed. He is accordingly a moving mass of filth and vermin: yet, withal, hardy, active, acute, and brave—a very locust to the land over which he sweeps as a conqueror, a very hornet to the flying enemy, whom it is his business to harass.

Up to the present moment, the French had been in possession of one bank of the Rhine, the Allies of the other; yet, by neither party was an attempt made to break in upon the repose of its adversaries. On the side of the French this forbearance was purely voluntary, for they had in battery opposite to Dusseldorf, two 8-pounders, and a howitzer. The Allies, I am afraid, could lay claim to no merit on that score, seeing that they were destitute of cannon, and possessed not a single boat wherewith to try the effect of a passage. But the cannon for which they had repeatedly sent, came up at last; and one night,

orders were given to plant eight 12-pounders above and below the town, so as to throw upon the French camp a cross-fire. Having been made aware of the issuing of these orders, and being desirous of witnessing the effect of the first discharge, I made interest with the governor of the jail to whom I was personally known, and was by him admitted into a cell in one of the upper stories, whence an extensive view of the surrounding country could be obtained. I took my place beside the barred window, just as the first gray streaks of dawn appeared in the sky, and the intensity of interest with which I watched them gradually extend, I have no power of language to describe. At last the morning came: there was nothing remarkable in it for a brief space; and in the French camp all seemed security and peace. The huts had been built with great regularity: they were filled with slumbering soldiers; not a man

indeed appeared to be awake throughout the whole encampment, except the sentries, and horses and mules stood picketed in numbers near. In a moment afterwards what a change was there! The allied guns opened. Crash went the huts, down fell horses and mules; forth from their sleeping-places rushed crowds of men, only that they might the more expose themselves to the showers of round and grape that fell among them; while here and there a human form stretched upon the earth, or dragging itself along, gave evidence that not in vain had round and grape sped upon their course. It was a horrid spectacle, for the wretches thus cut down neither had offered, nor could offer the smallest resistance; and their retreat itself, though begun without the loss of a moment, did not carry them for some time out of the reach of their destiny.

The French appeared to have been taken so much by surprise that they made, for a while, no reply to this rude salutation. By

degrees, however, their artillerists recovered their self-possession, and sharply and well their guns spoke back, sending round shot into many a house, and setting fire to more than one store of combustibles. On our side, however, as every possible preparation had been made to meet this exigency, buckets and engines were all ready, and the flames were soon extinguished. But besides that some lives were lost, more than one domicile received a mark of what war will do, in the shape of a round-shot lodged even in its inner chambers, which not to this day, I have reason to believe, have the Dusseldorfers thought it necessary to efface.

The firing continued on both sides till dusk, when the allies, having levelled the enemy's camp with the ground, ceased, and the enemy withdrew their guns from a position which was no longer tenable. But our people were not willing to let the matter end there. Having ascertained that two horse-

boats had been scuttled just before the French evacuated the place, the officer commanding caused them to be raised, and in the course of half an hour they were repaired and made sea-worthy. Immediately one hundred Prussian grenadiers, headed by a brave and enterprising young officer, volunteered to make a dash upon the town of Eberfeldt, where it was well known that most of the boats removed from the Dusseldorf side had been laid up. The offer was accepted, of course; and about midnight this handful of gallant fellows shoved off, carrying with them the best wishes of their countrymen. It appeared that they managed all things with equal prudence and bravery. They landed without observation, the French suspecting nothing on that side, and therefore having no sentries planted. They crept up towards the gate of the town, and lay down, waiting till the hour of relief should come round. It struck at last: they heard the relief mus-

ter inside; they saw the drawbridge fall and the gate roll back, and then, without so much as a cry, they sprang forward. The guard were bayoneted to a man, and into the town they rushed. What can soldiers do when thus surprised? That night a battalion of five hundred men, a general, and twenty officers of inferior rank, became prisoners to this handful of grenadiers, who seized them in their beds; and, when daylight came, the inhabitants of Eberfeldt were at once astonished and delighted to see that their town was in possession of the allies.

The glad tidings soon spread to Dusseldorf, and boats coming over, crowds of curious persons hastened to ascertain how matters had gone with the party. Among others, I must needs visit Eberfeldt, and a curious scene of revelry and triumph it presented. The Prussians occupied the great square, the French having been unceremoniously thrust into the common jail, and there, with the

inhabitants of all ranks and both sexes, they were carousing. But not to Dusseldorf alone had tidings of the night's work made their way. At Juliers, a place scarcely nine English miles distant, a division of six thousand French troops lay; and these, made aware of the disaster that had overtaken their comrades, hastened to avenge it. It was curious to watch the progress of things. Guns, tumbrils, ammunition-waggons, military stores of every description, quantities of bullion, of smallarms, and great-coats, were run down to the water's edge, and embarked; while, by-and-by, the idlers, whom curiosity had brought into danger, began to hurry as fast as possible beyond the reach of it. For, strange to say, though a lodgement was thus made, there existed no intention on the part of the allies to hold the ground on the enemy's bank of the river, and the hundred grenadiers received, in consequence, no reinforcement. Accordingly, the news no sooner spread that

an enemy's column was advancing, than helter-skelter all ran for the beach; and, in a few minutes, it seemed doubtful whether boats enough would remain to carry back again the handful of heroes who had so well accomplished the task committed to them.

The Prussian officer, however, was a good soldier in every sense of the word. He did not neglect his line of retreat: he marched a party down to the river, which at once took and kept possession of as many boats as were judged necessary. He then coolly planted his men under cover of certain houses which commanded the road by which the French must advance, and saluted the head of the column, as soon as it arrived within range, with a volley. A smart skirmish followed, in which the Prussians lost, I think, three men; but it was not of long continuance. The officer had done his duty; he therefore retreated in excellent order, and, carrying

with him his wounded, arrived on the opposite shore, amid the enthusiastic shouts of his comrades.

All this while the force of the allies continued to increase in and around Dusseldorf. Every farm-house and hovel in the neighbourhood was filled with troops, who, with their horses, literally licked up every thing that was fit for food—till, by-and-by, about twenty thousand men were ready to debouch by the opening which our Prussians had made. Among other arrivals, I must not omit to mention that of the Black Hussars—a corps originally raised by a Prussian noble, whom his master, for reasons of state, had sent into banishment. These men, with their leader, had long existed by plunder, which they carried off from far and near, and stored up in their haunts among the Hartz mountains. But when the crisis came, the chief of the band made a tender of his services to the allied sovereigns: he was pardoned and

accepted ; and the battles of Leipsic and Hennau bear testimony to the reckless bravery which marked his own proceedings and those of his followers. His men were well mounted: he had equipped them in black, and they bore upon the fronts of their chakos the same emblems which our own Black Brunswickers used to bear—namely, the skull and cross-bones. But though the rumour of their approach excited unspeakable alarm in Dusseldorf, I am bound to state that, when they did come, they conducted themselves with at least as much of regularity as any other body of armed men in the town. Two of their officers were quartered upon us, and we found them in all respects civil and even modest.

The Black Hussars, with the rest of the forces assembled in Dusseldorf, broke up in due time, and took the road to Paris. Other heavy columns moved simultaneously with them from Cologne and Coblenz; and the

newspapers, which circulated freely, told us day by day of some fresh triumph obtained and some province liberated. Such a state of things naturally excited in my mind a strong desire to revisit the land of my birth; and as spring came on, I only waited the return of my master in order to carry this natural and cherished scheme into execution. He came at last, bringing with him a letter from my mother, whom he had seen and informed of my wellbeing; and who, erroneously conceiving that I intended to live and die abroad, proposed to sell off her little property and join me at Dusseldorf. But this kind proposal only sharpened my zeal to breathe once more the atmosphere which I had breathed in my childhood; and suspecting that my master would throw impediments in the way, I set about making my preparations very quietly. At last I told him. He was surprised, vexed, and perhaps somewhat unjust: he refused at first to

let me go without three months' notice, and when I resisted this, he sent me away with less of kindness than I conceived that I had merited. I did not, however, resent the injury; but, retiring to a public-house, packed my little all into as narrow a compass as possible, and made ready to begin my homeward journey on the morrow.

Though Dusseldorf had been to me the land of strangers, there were some kind hearts there which I was loth to leave behind. This was particularly the case in reference to my first master and friend, Baron Golstein. Yet it would have been strange, had the consciousness of liberty recovered not very much outweighed these natural regrets; and I am not ashamed to acknowledge that my step was light and buoyant, as, for the last time, I traversed the streets of that ancient town: besides, I was not an object of any one's compassion. Two good suits of clothes I could call my own,

besides a watch and thirty odd Prussian dollars in money; while my travelling companion was a poodle dog, whose gambols served to while away many a vacant hour, and whose sagacity was not inferior to that of his kind in general. My first day's march, which carried me to Gueldres, was performed in the highest spirits; and my reception there having been all that the heart of man could wish, my second began under circumstances nowise less propitious.

It was a fine fresh morning, the 3rd of April, 1814, when this second march began. Having a considerable distance to accomplish, I started betimes, and was passing over an extensive heath—my pipe in my mouth, and my dog frisking round me—when far ahead I discovered the form of a man, and I quickened my pace, desiring to overtake him. I gained upon the stranger sufficiently to observe that he wore a glazed hat and a brown coat,—the former, at least,

affording ground to believe that he must be a countryman; so I stepped out lustily, being elated by the prospect of finding a pleasant companion with whom to converse by the way. The stranger, however, was evidently suspicious: he looked behind, and seeing me stride out, he began to stride also, thus increasing rather than diminishing the space that was between us. It was in vain that I sent on my dog, or that the animal, trotting from the one to the other, strove, as it were, to bring us together: the stranger held his pace, and I soon found that the hope of overtaking him, unless some check should occur, was idle.

The chase was thus continued, till a town or large village appeared in the distance, in passing through which I felt sure that I should lose my man. Not willing, however, to abandon my own project so long as the faintest prospect of a different result appeared, I sent my dog forward, and desired

him to keep the stranger in view till I should come up. I lost both man and beast at the entrance of the village; and not seeing either of them in the street, I made up my mind to pass on, even at the cost of my faithful poodle's company. But the dog thought differently: he suddenly showed himself at the head of a street, lane, or alley, and having, as it were, invited me to follow, turned round and waited for me. By these means, I was led to a public-house, in the taproom of which, sure enough, and ensconced behind the buttress of a large chimney, I beheld my man. He made every possible effort to hold aloof from me: I addressed him in German—he could not answer; I spoke to him in French, and received a reply in a wretched patois; after which I held out my hand and called him countryman, desiring him to keep a good heart, and not to shiver. He looked up like one who has received a reprieve on the gallows.

He had mistaken me, it appeared, for a gendarme, and being like myself a liberated prisoner, trembled at the anticipation of a recapture. As may be imagined, we became excellent friends in a moment; and both having our faces turned towards Holland, we resolved to prosecute the journey together.

My new acquaintance represented himself to me as captain and part owner of a brig from Halifax: he had been ten years in a French prison, and having effected his escape with but a slender stock of money in his pocket, his means of getting refreshment by the way were quite exhausted. These tidings only made me the more desirous of accepting his companionship during my progress: I compassionated his sufferings, and told him he should share the contents of my purse—he giving me, in return, repeated assurances that my outlay would be more than made good, so soon as we reached Rotter-

dam; and as I could not for a moment doubt either his inclination or his ability to perform the promise, I made him heartily welcome to the best at each stage where we halted.

It is not worth while to describe at length the little adventures that befel us during our progress to Nimeguen. They were such as fall to the lot of pedestrians in general, with this solitary exception, that at Nimeguen, my companion not being provided with a passport, would have found it impossible to obtain admission into the place, had I not interceded for him. But the commandant, a good-natured old gentleman, no sooner heard the particulars of our story, than he gave orders that both should be accommodated with apartments, and be permitted to rest in the town three whole days. We then took a *trackschuyt*, which in three days more conveyed us to Rotterdam, where, on one of the quays, at the sign of the

Dolphin, we fixed our head-quarters. But my money—not very abundant at the outset—was by this time beginning to run short, and certain very awkward suspicions of my companion's honesty would rise in spite of me, seeing that he made no effort at all to replenish the purse. Still I hoped the best. I even went with him to the English Consul's house—Mr. Ferrier's—of whom we together begged a supply, but who told us frankly, that though he could procure us a passage to England, he had no money at his disposal for us or for any body. Accordingly, we were fain to accept letters to the naval officer in command at Helvoetsluys, and, in company with two or three more Englishmen, pushed off in one of the packet-boats for the mouth of the Maese.

In the course of this voyage, as well as during our sojourn at Helvoetsluys, I was very much indebted to the kindness of one of our fellow-passengers, a groom in the em-

ployment of the Prince Regent, who had been sent to Holland with a present of two fine horses for the Prince of Orange. That individual, being flush of money, insisted on acting as paymaster throughout, and used his best endeavours to get me away from the society of the captain, whom he never particularly admired. But, partly because I was not willing to wrong a fellow-prisoner, partly because I believed that, being honest, he would pay his debts, and otherwise befriend me on our arrival in England, I resisted all the groom's suggestions, and, taking my passage in the same ship with the captain, was conveyed safely to Harwich. As we messed in different parts of the ship, the captain boarding with the lieutenants, and I living with the petty officers, we had comparatively little intercourse during the voyage; and, when I came to land, I found that my friend had got the start of me by an hour. I was both provoked and mortified; and, being

determined at least to tell him my mind, I made all haste to the London coach-office. But in this particular, too, my labour proved vain; the coach had started about twenty minutes, and my friend having ensconced himself on the top, I never saw nor heard of him again.

The Kilkenny Militia happening at this time to be quartered in Harwich, I proceeded to report myself to the officer in command, and received orders to join one of the messes of the corps till arrangements could be made for forwarding me to my own regiment. I went to the room allotted to me; but the miserable fare of the militia-men—a red-herring and a bowl of potatoes—agreed so little with my notions of comfort, that I at once made up my mind to have nothing more to say to them. I accordingly repaired to a public-house, where, with the last coin that adhered to the interior of my pocket—an eighteen-pence token—I treated myself,

and a soldier whom I found there, to a noggin of English gin. Moreover, I found there an opportunity of befriending four foreigners, strangers at once to the language and the manners of our island, who had come over in the hope of getting a pension—long ago granted to them by the Duke of York—renewed. I ordered their supper for them, became their interpreter, went with them to the coach-office, and next morning saw them off;—trifling acts in themselves, doubtless, yet, by persons in their situation, felt and admitted to be grave favours. And now, being reduced to a few pence, yet resolute not to return to barracks, I pawned my watch to the landlord for five shillings, and sat down in a corner, with my pipe, not a little disconsolate.

I was thus circumstanced, when the door of the room opened, and there entered, with a shout, about a score of seamen, all rigged out in their best, and all bedizened with knots

and streamers of ribbon. They instantly recognised me, for they were part of the crew of the frigate in which I had crossed from Holland; and, having informed me that they had received three months' pay, with three days ashore in which to spend it, they insisted on my casting in my lot with them. It will be readily imagined that I neither experienced nor expressed the smallest reluctance to become their guest. And, sure enough, for the entire space of time which they had at their command, ours was a life of revelry and joyance.

The first thing to be done was to provide a fiddler, and an adequate number of partners for a dance. These were soon procured, and supper, with an ample supply of grog, egg-flip, and other good things, being ordered, the ball began in a large outhouse attached to the inn. Nobody went to bed that night, and though the sailors ate less than might have been expected, the consumption of

liquor was something quite unparalleled. Next day, hackney-coaches were procured, and, the fiddler playing all the way, we made an excursion, partners and all, into the country. There, too, a convenient house of entertainment was found, where, as in the town, dancing and frolic chased the hours away till evening. A dinner followed, and we returned to Harwich, with frequent halts by the way, in order that the crews of the different vehicles might refresh themselves; and, that nothing might be wanting to complete the farce, we did not compass our journey without a fight. One of our party happening to quiz a negro belonging to the band of the militia, the latter grew restive, and Jack and he had a regular set-to, from which Jack came off victorious. But why continue these details?—the seamen kept up the fun till the hour arrived when their lieutenant came to inform them that their time was expended, after which they returned cheerfully

on board of ship, and I was once more left to my solitude.

I was not altogether easy, in consequence of the breach of discipline of which I had been guilty, in absenting myself without leave from the barracks, and had made up my mind to return, when a corporal entered the room where I was sitting, and asked eagerly of the landlord whether or not he had seen me. I made myself known to the corporal at once, and was much relieved when he informed me that orders had arrived to forward me to my regiment, and that he was already in possession of my marching-money. The watch which I had pawned was redeemed, my little bundle packed, and at an early hour on the following morning I began my march towards London.

CHAPTER II.

Home—Rejoin my Regiment—Rejoicings for Peace—
Country Quarters—Fresh Alarms—Campaign in
the Low Countries.

OUR first march carried us to Colchester, a distance of twenty miles, which—I can scarcely tell why—tried my powers of endurance severely. The second day we reached Romford, and on the third I found myself in my mother's arms. I had written from Harwich, to acquaint her of my safety, and to announce the time when she might expect to see me; and I was welcomed, in consequence, not by her alone, but by as many of our friends and relatives

as she could get together. A very happy day was that, as were two others which succeeded it, during which the corporal was our guest, and by every member of the family treated with great kindness ; and then, having bidden them all farewell, I set out for Hampton Court, where a detachment from the 11th was on duty, and to the officer commanding which I reported myself. Mr. Gould was an old acquaintance, who welcomed me back to the corps with great kindness ; and I spent a day or two with the detachment very much to my own satisfaction, and not, I am inclined to think, disagreeably to others.

I joined my regiment at Hounslow, where, to my inexpressible delight, I found the man who, in former years, used to be my comrade. The greeting was on both sides the more hearty, that in our own troop there was not one in ten whom I could recognise. Indeed, I do not think

that out of the five hundred men, from whom the fortune of war had separated me three years previously, one hundred continued to wear the uniform of the 11th Light Dragoons. Among the officers, likewise, great changes had occurred, though of them a considerable portion remained. Yet they all received me as if I had had some personal claim upon their attentions, and gave me every indulgence which I could reasonably desire. I was here equipped in new clothing,—I got a fresh charger assigned me,—and, in due time, found myself once more engaged in the common routine of military life.

At the period of which I now speak England was rejoicing, in all her towns and villages, over the restoration of peace. In London, the Prince Regent kept open house for the monarchs and great warriors of Europe; whilst, at Windsor, Queen Charlotte feasted the poor on the fat of the land.

As I happened to be present at one of these noble festivals,—for noble they certainly were, at least, in design,—it may not, perhaps, prove altogether uninteresting to the reader, if I treat him to a description of what passed under my own observation.

Having spent so much time in private service, I became, as was to be expected, a sort of marked man in the corps, and soon found that among the officers there was considerable competition as to which should get me. It ended in my joining my fortunes to that of a young lieutenant, who, possessing a handsome income, and being besides a man of family, was, during this season of universal jubilee, permitted to do pretty much as he liked. Him I accompanied to Windsor; and, as he was much more in the metropolis than present with the corps, my time became to a great degree my own property. It happened, one day, that I strolled in my fustian undress, into the old

guard-room of the castle, where tables were spread for two thousand persons at the least. They literally groaned under a profusion of choice morsels, such as haunches and saddles of mutton, sirloins of beef, fillets of veal, hams and tongues, rounds, barons, and I know not all what,—with vegetables, salads, bread, and plum-pudding in proportion. I was amazingly struck, as may easily be conceived; and, having formed a strong wish to become a sharer in the festivities, I laid myself out—as the result proved, not unsuccessfully—to carry my point.

There were a variety of little offices or closets, adjoining the guard-room, in which women busily employed themselves in working tickets for the favoured individuals who were to be admitted to the dinner. Into one of these I wandered, just, as it happened, when the lady on duty had expended her entire stock save one, and of that one I was immediately rendered the possessor. I stuck

it in my hat forthwith,—the men carried the badges there, the women and children on the breasts of their robes,—and soon found myself seated at a table, which accommodated, besides myself, fifty-nine diners. I came, however, under circumstances far more unfavourable than those around me; for they, one and all, brought with them their knives, forks, and drinking-cups,—whereas, I not having so much as read any of the handbills which set forth the programme of the day's entertainment, sat down profoundly ignorant that any such precautionary measures had been requisite. This was a source to me partly of vexation, partly of extreme amusement. The vexation arose from the natural pressure of appetite, which I was not without apprehension I might find myself unable to appease; the amusement was furnished by the behaviour of my next neighbour, who seemed determined to make the most of the opportunity that was pre-

sented to him. The individual in question followed the respectable calling of an itinerant fiddler. Many a penny I had given the rogue; yet he was dressed on this occasion so smartly, that I knew him not, at least till after his excessive predilection for number one induced me to scan him closely. But that was the least of it.

We had all been seated perhaps a couple of minutes—every eye being turned keenly towards the viands, that spoke to more senses than one; and my musical neighbour had sneered at my lack of preparation, and more than insinuated that I had no business where I was, when a flourish of trumpets announced the approach of royalty, and we all stood up to welcome the queen and the courtly cortège that attended her. She walked, followed by her train, along the several tables, the company greeting her with repeated cheers, and then, after expressing at each a hope that we would do

justice to the cheer provided, she withdrew. Then followed the "Roast Beef of Old England," from a band that was appointed to attend; and then such an onslaught as in modern times has rarely, on any one given spot of earth, been witnessed. For my own part, having neither knife, nor fork, nor cup, I felt for a brief space as if I were destined to be a mere spectator. But my cross-grained fiddler supplied me with an opportunity of playing my own part in the game, and I did not fail to take advantage of it.

"I wish you would cut me a good slice of that fillet of veal," said he. "It is too far for me to reach, and lies handy to you."

"By all means," was my reply, "but you must lend me your knife and fork."

He did so; and I very coolly helped myself, taking care to cut up the morsel into pieces, and keep them ready for consumption by the hand. I shall never forget the rage of my right hand-neighbour while this process

was going on ; neither did the enormous extent to which I proceeded to help him quite allay it. And by-and by, when he gave me his jug, that I might fill it with beer for his use, and I, instead of handing it back, drank out of it, and drank to his health, I really thought the minstrel would have gone mad. Nevertheless, in the end, he and I became excellent friends. I plied him, especially with strong beer, to such a degree that he did not know whether his head or his heels were uppermost ; and if he did not die of absolute repletion, the fault was neither mine who loaded his trencher, nor his, who most voraciously cleared it.

If the progress of the dinner astonished as well as amused me, much more amusing, as well as astonishing, was the scene with which it terminated. The queen, it appeared, had given orders that not a fragment of that enormous feast should fall to the share of any others than those who par-

took in it; and the consequence was that, on a second roll of the drums, such a scramble began as I have never witnessed either before or since. The women, having provided themselves with capacious aprons, came for the most part best off in that *mélée*. They swept whole joints—with puddings, potatoes, and Lord knows all what besides—into their laps, while the men hastened to stuff their pouches to an extent which was truly marvellous. Among others, my musical neighbour used his best exertions to possess himself of a plentiful share; but the strong beer had so effectually filled his stomach, and clouded his brain, that in attempting to stretch across the table for something which excited his cupidity, the equilibrium failed, and he rolled on the floor, smashing into a confused mass all that he had previously gathered, and mixing the whole with fragments of his quart jug, which, somehow or another, had found its

way into a wallet that hung by his side. I plead guilty to the charge of having tossed him with my foot twice or thrice through the mess, and then, amid shouts of laughter, I escaped, not knowing which to admire the most, the hospitality of my royal mistress, or the strange uses to which by her uncouth guests it had been turned. Before I conclude this story I may as well state that I met my fiddler a day or two afterwards, plying his trade in his every-day attire, and at his usual corners. We had a little bandying of half-angry, half-jocular words, which I cut short by tossing him a penny; and I do not know that we ever met afterwards.

Our next move was to Hampton Court and Twickenham, where similar scenes were repeated—oxen being roasted whole, and all who chose partaking in them; but I need not pause to relate the effect which they produced upon myself. It will be more to the

purpose if I state, that being so near London, I found frequent opportunities both of entertaining my relatives at the quarters of the regiment, and of visiting them in their own homes; during the latter of which occurrences an adventure once befel me, which, as it was rather a curious one, may be deserving of a brief notice. I had supped at the house of one of my aunts, and having rather overstaid my time, (for I was for duty at Whitehall on the following morning,) I was hurrying through Piccadilly, in order to reach my quarters, when at the corner of a street I was startled by the sound of fire-arms, accompanied by a noise as of the smashing of glass. A man passed me at the same moment, running, and holding up the skirts of a long surtout, and almost immediately afterwards a second appeared, with a stream of blood flowing from his mouth. He made towards me, put a hand on each of my shoulders, and endeavouring vainly to articulate, deluged me

in a moment with gore. There was a lamp close to us, by the light of which I could distinguish that he was a mere youth; but I had no time to do more, for instantly a voice shouted "Watch," and the wounded man, as if alarmed, hurried away, and endeavoured to mount the box of a hackney-coach which drove furiously past. The coachman, however, repulsed him, and he staggered across the street, marking his progress by the sanguine tide which flowed from him. And now the watch began to assemble, who, seeing me covered with blood, demanded whether I were not wounded, while the same voice which had summoned them desired to be informed whether any one were shot. I answered in the affirmative, and, pointing to the track, desired the guardians of the night to follow it up; for I was not the wounded man, as they would find if they made good use of their senses. Away they ran in pursuit, whereupon I, not caring to get further

involved in the business, took to my heels, and reached my quarters without molestation. But the issue of the adventure was the most extraordinary of all. Being on guard next day, at Whitehall, a young man happened to pass the Horse Guards, whom I instantly recognised as the individual whom I had seen the night before fleeing with his hands upon his pockets. I stopped him, charged him with the fact, and was answered by a frank confession, accompanied, however, with an earnest entreaty that I would not betray him. It appeared that he was the son of a respectable innkeeper—that he had fallen into bad company, and been persuaded to assist that night in a burglary at the shop of a linen-draper. But the linendraper, either because it was his wont, or having got some intimation of the design, was on the look-out to defeat it, and fired a pistol just as the leading burglar was removing the shutter, and about to cut a pane

in the window. I did not disclose what I knew to any one; for the father of the young delinquent was an acquaintance of my own, and I am happy to say that the promises of amendment which he gave, were never broken. But his companion, I afterwards discovered, did not live to have his moral principle put to the test. He died of the wound which the linendraper inflicted, and was buried, I cannot tell where, but very quietly, by his associates.

We remained in the neighbourhood of London about six months, at the termination of which period we marched to Canterbury, where, and at Deal, the back pay was given to such of our men as had been like myself, prisoners of war. Of this the Jews first, and ultimately the publicans, reaped the principal benefit—for, next to a sailor, a soldier is, of all living men, the least regardful of his money. But other work than this was already cut out for us,

and Buonaparte's unexpected return from Elba sent us to the place where we were destined to perform it. I never shall forget the effect which the intelligence had upon us. It reached us one morning, and in two hours after came the rout to march for Dover, where transports lay to receive us; and by four o'clock on the following afternoon we were busily engaged swimming our horses ashore, towards the beach at Ostend.

It was about eight o'clock on a summer's evening when our disembarkation was effected. The process had been tedious, inasmuch as the transports were too heavily laden to approach within half-a-mile of the beach; and to swim horses through so wide a waste of waters is an operation that occupies a good deal of time. Nevertheless the regiment formed up as soon as circumstances would allow, and began its march the same evening to Nieuport. It was now that I

found my knowledge of the German language greatly avail me. Being sent, with a comrade, to quarter in a farm-house about a mile beyond the town, I so entirely won the hearts of the family, by speaking so as to be understood, that they vied with one another in their eagerness to make us comfortable; and themselves undertaking to clean and fodder the horses, they kept us—no reluctant guests—all night at the supper-table. But this was not the only piece of good fortune that befel me, which I was justified in attributing to my long residence in the Count's family. I was instantly promoted to the office of billet-master for the corps; and, besides obtaining temporary rank as a serjeant, I came in for sundry perquisites, such as the French had taught the Belgians to pay as often as orders were issued for the supply of bread, or meat, or wine, to bodies of troops upon the march.

From Nieuport we proceeded to Bruges,

where we halted an entire day, of which I made the best use, by visiting as many of the sights of the place as the opportunities at my command would allow. Our next point was Ghent, a noble city, where we witnessed the entrance of Louis XVIII., for the second time a fugitive from Paris. But as he came without parade, so during the whole of his sojourn there we heard little of him, except that he was a regular attendant at mass. Meanwhile fresh regiments were continually arriving, and we were in consequence carried, on the breast of the living tide, first to Merbeck, and ultimately to Goyek. We were at this latter place on the 29th of May, when the Duke of Wellington reviewed the whole of his cavalry, and a finer military spectacle was never, I venture to assert, submitted to the admiring gaze of the Netherlanders. Unless my memory deceive me, twenty regiments formed in two lines that day, flanked and supported by a force of

horse-artillery, such as all Europe besides could not match; and as the horses were in admirable condition, and the men young, healthy, and well-appointed, it is very little to be wondered at if both men and officers experienced but one feeling—an earnest desire to be led against the enemy, and a perfect assurance of success.

We were well supplied both with forage and provisions; yet, somehow or another, money was scarce—for no pay had been issued since we quitted England, and some corps were full three months in arrear. Now a soldier cannot get on—at least in a civilized country, without a little silver in his purse. His allowance of grog or wine by no means contents him; and he cannot hear the sound of the pipe and tabor without desiring to dance. As usually happens in like cases, we were immediately put to our shifts; and the following was the expedient on which we lighted—for a season with

marvellous success. There are two coins used in this city, of which the dies are precisely alike; though the one, having a slight intermixture of silver with the copper, passes current for about threepence halfpenny—whereas the other is valued at half a farthing. Some ingenious fellow among us discovered, that by rubbing the latter with mercurial ointment it assumed at once the appearance of the former; and many a pint of gin, I grieve to say, was paid for with the half farthing. I can offer no justification of a procedure which was certainly dishonest—unless, indeed, the exorbitancy of the prices demanded from us can be received as such. But I know that we laughed very heartily when the trick began to be discovered; and were the more free of our mirth that the very same day we quitted Merberk, never to return to it again.

CHAPTER III.

Signs of coming Strife—Sudden Route—The Field of
Quatre Bras—Battle of Waterloo.

ALL this while we were in profound ignorance as to the state of things, both in France or elsewhere. We knew, indeed, that Buonaparte had made a triumphant entrance into Paris; and we heard from various quarters that the armies of the northern powers were moving. But how soon a struggle might be expected, or whether it would first occur with ourselves, was a point which we had no means to determine. We were thus circumstanced, my troop occupying quarters in a village called Vione,

when, on the morning of the 16th of June, the alarm was suddenly given. We had mustered for field exercise, ourselves in undress, and the saddles strapped—as the expression is when we ride them without cloaks or valises—when an orderly dragoon was observed approaching at speed, and making straight for the officer in command. He was the bearer of intelligence that the French, on the previous day, had attacked and defeated the Prussians at Ligne; and that Napoleon, with the bulk of his army, was in full march to attack the positions of the English. In an instant we received the word to gallop horses, pack up, and accoutre; and in an incredibly short space of time the whole regiment mustered beside its alarm-post, in every respect prepared for action. Let me not forget to mention that, like an old soldier as I was, I took care not to move without a stock of provisions for myself as well as for my charger. All the

men carried their nose-bags filled with corn, and a supply of hay behind them, sufficient for four-and-twenty hours; but the young hands forgot that men, as well as horses, are little fit for work when they are starving. I had a lump of bacon and a loaf of bread in my haversack, of which not many hours elapsed ere I experienced the great benefit.

The line being formed, and wheeled into column by threes, we set forward at a good round trot; and, after compassing about fourteen miles, heard what the excessive heat of the weather induced us to believe was the rolling of thunder at a distance. Another half-hour's progress, however, set that notion aside; for then we could distinguish the smoke as it curled over the woods of Quatre Bras, and were no longer at a loss to tell that artillery was firing sharply. These sights and sounds had no tendency to repress our ardour; we gave the jaded

horses the spur, and kept them on the trot till full five-and-twenty miles were compassed. It would have been both cruel and useless to urge them further without a rest, so we dismounted and loosened girths without feeding. But the halt was not prolonged beyond the interval which was absolutely necessary, and in a quarter of an hour we were once more in the saddle. And now, as we drew nearer to the scene of action, the evidences of deadly strife multiplied upon us. The cannonade became louder, and mixed with it was the short sharp rattle of musketry; while, by-and-by, a quantity of waggons, laden with ammunition and stores of every sort, were passed in one of the small towns. Finally, groups of persons were seen approaching, whom, on our nearing one another, we recognised to be the wounded, some of whom appeared to be suffering much, though all bore themselves nobly under their pain. Poor fel-

lows, they drew to one side that we might pass, and cheered lustily. "Push on, push on," was their cry, "you are very much wanted; for there is no cavalry up." And we did push on as fast as our now jaded animals would go; but all our efforts failed to bring us to the field in time to take part in the action.

We had ridden, I conceive, about forty miles, and the sun was long set, when the red flashes of musketry and cannon greeted us. "Halt!" was the word given; "cut away forage, and draw swords." The hay was cut loose, our swords flashed in the air, and at the signal, "Quick trot," away we went again. But, as I have already said, we did not reach the field till the firing had ceased. We formed line, however, and riding over numbers of the dead, if not of the dying, approached our own troops, which lay upon their arms; whence in a few minutes we received orders to fall back,

and to picket our horses for the night in a place that was convenient for them.

Throughout the whole of that night there was a dropping fire of musketry kept up in the woods to the right and left of our bivouac. The outposts of infantry chose to skirmish instead of sleep, and we were in consequence kept constantly on the alert. But this was not the only, nor, perhaps, the greatest grievance to which our position subjected us. The horses had not tasted water since the march began, and the darkness was such as, combined with their extreme weariness, hindered our men in general from going in search of it. Again the habits of the old soldier prevailed with me; and knowing that on the efficiency of my horse my own depended, I resolved, at all hazards, to fetch him some water. Accordingly I proposed to my comrade that we should steal away together; and he consented the more readily on my putting him

in mind that the very same process which won refreshment for our chargers might insure a good supper for ourselves; and that the most zealous martinet would never blame us, if in seeking for the one we should chance to stumble on the other.

Armed each with a pistol, and carrying a sack and leathern bucket in our hands, my comrade and I stole from the bivouac; and having previously noticed a village about a mile distant, we made directly for it. We entered, and found the stillness of the grave; but, by-and-by, observing a light in the window of one of the houses, I knocked at the door, and we were admitted. My astonishment may be conceived, when the first object that met my gaze was a French grenadier, fully accoutred, and seated in the chimney corner. It was no time for hesitation, so I cocked my pistol; when up he rose, welcomed us with perfect self-possession; and pointing to his knee,

informed us that he was wounded. Perceiving that he spoke the truth, I desired him to sit down again, adding an assurance that he had nothing to fear ; and he, coolly taking me at my word, and smoking his pipe, I next addressed myself to the master of the house. It was to no purpose, however, that I demanded food and drink. The French, he replied, had taken every thing from him ; which was not exactly the case ; for my companion, having instituted a search in the cellar, soon returned, bringing with him part of a ham, a loaf of bread, and some butter. With these we judged it expedient to be content ; so, wishing both our host and the wounded man a good night, we passed the threshold, and hurried back to the camp.

Before reaching the lines, we fortunately came upon a ditch full of water, in which we filled our buckets, greatly to the satisfaction of our weary chargers. Our horses

were not, however, the only animals who benefited by this discovery. Having informed the rest where the water lay, they also provided enough for the wants of themselves and their cattle: and the night in consequence passed more agreeably than either by man or beast had been anticipated. But as far as the means of satisfying other wants of nature were affected, I and my comrade stood, I believe, alone. We made a hearty supper of our ham and bread, and regretted only that it was impossible to share the morsel with others.

Day dawned at length, and exhibited to us some strange spectacles calculated as well to raise the spirits as to depress them. We could now observe that the whole surface of the country over which yesterday's fighting had occurred, was covered with the slain; while in our rear and on either flank, a prodigious force of cavalry and light artillery which had arrived during the night,

was in position. The latter made a brave show, especially in the eyes of our gallant infantry, who, few in number, had sustained repeated shocks from the enemy's horse, and uniformly repulsed them. But it soon appeared, that let the decisive battle occur when it might, we were not on this ground to measure ourselves again with the enemy. By degrees the infantry began to march to the rear. The cavalry and artillery stood fast to cover them, when they, in their turn slowly withdrew, as if reluctant to yield a foot of ground without fighting for it. Strange to say, the enemy did not appear for some time, to be aware of what was going on in our ranks. The infantry was well to the rear, so were the heavy cavalry, ere they made a movement in pursuit; indeed, it must have been full three o'clock in the afternoon ere we found ourselves under the necessity of throwing out skirmish-

ers, so as to check the advance, which was then pushed with considerable ardour.

There was a good deal of carbine practice, and prancing here and there, for about half an hour, at the close of which, the artillery began on both sides to open; while a mass of black clouds, which had been gathering all the day, broke at the concussion, and the rain descended in torrents. It is curious to observe how, even in such warfare as this, a heavy fall of rain operates as a sedative on animal courage. The skirmishing ceased as if by common consent; and the fighting was confined to an occasional dash of one of the enemy's leading squadrons against ours, which covered the rear; when sword-cuts were exchanged, and men and horses went down, as well from among us, as from among the assailants. Once in particular we had rather a sharp bout of it, for the enemy contrived, I know not how, to in-

terpose between the plain on which we were moving, and a narrow road that led out of it, and no alternative remained except to cut our way through them. We rode at them with loosened reins, and soon opened a way for ourselves, cutting to pieces, among others, a French General, and leaving not above half-a-dozen of our own men behind.

We halted that night behind the crest of the rising ground which is still pointed out to the curious traveller as the Duke of Wellington's position on the great day of Waterloo. The rain, which fell in torrents, and had done so for hours ere our arrival, soon reduced the face of the country to a state of swamp; and as our bivouac was formed in a ploughed field, the comparative comforts of our situation require no poet's art to describe them. At every step which you took, you sank to the knees, and your foot, when you dragged it to the surface again, came loaded with some twenty pounds of clay.

Moreover, fuel, with which to make fires, was wanting; till in despair some of us ran to a village about a mile in the rear, and came back laden with various articles of furniture, the whole of which were committed to the flames. Then again as to food—if I except a single biscuit and a glass of spirits—none had been served out since daybreak, and none came throughout the whole of that dreary night, either to officers or to men. I cannot say that our martial ardour was such as to render us either insensible of, or indifferent to, the *desagrémens* of our situation; yet I am bound to record, that we sustained them with wonderful equanimity, comforted by the knowledge that the night, which was short, would soon pass away, and that the morrow would in some shape or another, obviate the necessity of passing many more in a similar manner.

Before the morning broke, we were in our saddles:—and immediately the horizon put

on the hue of coming day, we shifted our ground to the brow of the hill, and there watered our horses. That done we dismounted; and removing the remnant of our fuel to the new parade ground we again lighted fires, and dried as well as we could, both our clothes and accoutrements. The Commissary, however, was slow in making his appearance; so, entertaining serious misgivings both as to my own powers of endurance, and those of my steed, which had been tried well nigh to the uttermost, I determined, let come what might, to find a breakfast for both. I looked round, and saw in the rear a village, to which straggling parties of the Foot Guards were continually passing. I ran thither, but looked about vainly, in every house, for those things of which I was in want. At last, just as I had come to the conclusion that further search would be useless, and that I had best return, I entered an apartment, where, in the middle

of the floor, sat a solitary Yorkshireman, with a brown jar between his legs. He laughed, begged me to come in, and offered to share with me what he had: it was bread and sour cream, out of which both he and I contrived to make a capital breakfast. After which, I mounted by a trap-ladder to a loft, where, to my great delight, stores both of oats and peas were deposited. I filled my handkerchief, which was a large one; and having contrived, over and above, to get possession of half-a-dozen canteens of beer, I ran back, well pleased with the results of my adventure, to the front. My gallant steed fared well; and he repaid me for the care I took of him by the pliability and vigour of his movements throughout the day.

When I reached the ground, my companions were all busily engaged rubbing down their horses and cleaning their accoutrements. I took care to feed my charger first, and then groomed him; nor had I

finished buckling up the neatly rolled cloak, when a gun was discharged from some point near us, and, in an instant, the whole face of affairs underwent a change. Drums beat, trumpets brayed, while salvoes of artillery from either side told of a battle begun; and, while we mounted and closed our ranks, peal after peal of musketry warned us that ere long their consistency would be tried. By-and-by an order arrived to take ground to the right, where we enrolled ourselves in brigade with the 12th and 16th; and, forming close columns of regiments, waited till the moment should arrive when to us, also, the honour should be awarded of striking a few blows for Old England and victory.

The place where we were directed to execute this formation chanced to be particularly favourable for obtaining a view over the whole field of battle, as well as the overnight positions of the two armies. And never have these eyes of mine rested on a

more imposing scene than, for a brief space, was spread out before them. As far as the eye could reach I beheld endless columns of the French—the infantry in front interlaced, as it were, with artillery; while in the rear were masses of cavalry, in comparison with which, as far as numbers go, we appeared as nothing. Then, again, on our side, I beheld horse, foot, and guns, all in admirable order, hidden in some degree from the enemy by the swell of the ground, yet all, as their attitudes denoted, thoroughly on the alert: while, both on our side and that of the French, staff-officers in groups, and orderlies one by one, were galloping hither and thither, as if they had been the veritable messengers of fate. But the vision was like that which the sleeper obtains when, for a moment, the gates of Fairy-land are opened before him. From the hundreds of cannon, which sent forth death on each side, such a cloud of smoke arose as soon rendered ob-

jects indistinct; and when the musketry began to play, every living and dead thing on the earth's surface was shrouded under a canopy of gray mist.

It were idle in one filling the humble situation which I did to attempt any thing like the description of a great battle, especially such a battle as that of Waterloo. From the instant that the firing became general, all was to me dark and obscure beyond the distance of a few hundred yards from the spot on which I stood; indeed, it was only by the ceaseless roar, or the whistling of shot and shell around me, that I knew at times that I and those near me were playing a part in the grave game of life and death. For the cavalry, unlike the infantry, come into play only by fits and starts, and they have patiently to sustain the fury of a cannonade, to which they can offer no resistance, and out of the range of which they are not permitted to move. Neither was

the brigade to which I belonged left long in ignorance touching both the peril and extreme discomfort of this species of inaction. For the French, perceiving us, opened upon our columns a battery of howitzers and light mortars, one shell from which falling into the very centre of the 16th, created terrible havock. But as if to hinder us from getting unsteady, an aide-de-camp rode up at this moment, and two squadrons, one from the 12th, another from our regiment, were ordered to drive back some lancers which had threatened certain of our guns. We went at them with good will, but not, perhaps, with perfect judgment. We did not consider that, when the ground is soft and heavy, a charge down hill is, of all operations to which cavalry can be put, the most unsafe; and the consequence was, that rushing over the ridge at speed, very many of our horses came down, and we lost all order. The result need hardly be stated. The

squadron of the 12th, which led, was almost cut to pieces, and we, with difficulty and in great disorder, recovered the brigade.

This was not satisfactory, yet we believed that we could account for it, and finding ourselves again in our proper places, we desired nothing more than a repetition of the experiment. But, during the remainder of the day, little else fell to our share than to sustain, as we best might, the heavy fire of cannon which the enemy continued to direct against us. At each discharge, men and horses went down: yet we suffered less than a regiment of Nassau Hussars, which, keeping ground in our rear, served to catch every ball that passed over us. Nor was it the least disagreeable attendant on our position, that we stood exactly on such a spot as enabled us to behold the last struggles of the wounded, whose strength sufficed only to carry them a few yards to the rear. There was a long sort of ditch, or

drain, some way behind us, towards which these poor fellows betook themselves by scores; and ere three hours had passed, it was absolutely choked up with the bodies of those who lay down there only that they might die. Then, again the wounded horses, of which multitudes wandered all over the field, troubled us. They would come back, some with broken legs, others trailing after them their entrails, which the round-shot had knocked out, and forcing themselves between our files, seemed to solicit the aid which no one had time to afford, and which, if afforded, would have been useless.

We were beginning to get tired of this state of things, when an order reached us to form line and move off to the left. "Now then," thought we, "a charge is before us;" but it was not so. A square of Brunswick Infantry had, it appeared, begun to waver, and, as a failure on that point might have proved fatal, we were brought up to stop it

if we could. We drew our swords, cheered, made our horses prance, and the desired end was gained. The Brunswickers perceiving that there was support at hand, took up their arms, which some of them had thrown away, and they throughout the remainder of the action behaved with all the gallantry for which their countrymen have in every age and country been remarkable.

Having effected this object, we were directed to fall back, and to dismount, that our horses might in some measure recruit their strength. Many wounded men passed us while thus resting; but of the case of only one I shall make mention, because it struck me at the moment as being a remarkable one. An infantry soldier approached, and asked me for a cup of water. I saw that he was wounded; and, recollecting that a canteen of beer was at my back, out of which I had been too much engaged to drink myself, I handed it to him and de-

sired him to quench his thirst without scruple. The poor fellow drank, thanked me heartily, told me that almost all his regiment—the 28th—was destroyed ; and then, lifting himself from my horse, on which he had been leaning, tottered towards the rear. I watched him, and saw that he had not gone twelve yards when he fell. Almost immediately afterwards his limbs gave a convulsive stretch, and he was a corpse. I went up to him, and saw where the fatal ball had taken its course, just above the hip-bone. Yet he seemed to die easily; and his voice, not three minutes ere the soul quitted the body, gave scarcely the smallest sign of weakness.

By this time the dusk was closing fast; and, as the battle continued to rage with unabated fury, the magnificence of the scene received, from minute to minute, a perpetual increase to its intensity. Over the surface of the ground, shells, with their burning

fuses, rolled, bursting here and there with terrible effect. From the mouths of the cannon fire seemed to be poured, while the ceaseless glare of the musketry, as the opposing lines fought muzzle to muzzle, was terrific. By degrees, however, the sounds and sight of fire-arms began to be distinguishable where neither had before been observed; and the rumour ran from rank to rank among us, that the Prussians were come, and had fallen upon the right and rear of the enemy. Moreover, that the news was not without foundation, was soon apparent, from the altered state of things both near us and far away. Our infantry, which up to this moment had fought in squares, formed all at once into line. There was a heart-stirring cheer begun, I know not where, but very soon audible over the whole of our front; and we, too, were ordered to leap into the saddle and move forward. How can I pretend to describe what followed! On we

went at a gallop, dashing past the weary yet gallant footmen, and, shouting as we went, drove fiercely and without check up to the very muzzles of a hostile battery. A furious discharge of grape met us, and thinned our ranks. Before it man and horse went down; but the survivors, never pulling bridle or pausing to look back, scattered the gunners to the winds, and the cannon were our own. Just at this moment, Serjeant Emmet of the 11th, whom I covered, received a shot in the groin, which made him reel in his saddle, from which he would have fallen, had I not caught him; while at the same time a ball struck me on the knee, the bone of which was saved by the interposition of my unrolled cloak. For in the morning I had not found time to pack it in its place; and it hung before me in loose folds, through most of which the bullet made its way, terribly bruising, yet not disabling, the limb. I was glad to save my serjeant, for

he was a good and a brave man. Yet I own that I felt bitter mortification when the tide of war swept past us, and I felt myself cut off from sharing in the general triumph. Accordingly, perceiving a corporal near, I called him to lend his assistance, and no sooner saw him seize the serjeant by the other arm, than I loosed my hold. "One whole man," thought I, "is enough to take care of a wounded one;" and then I plyed my spurs into my horse's sides, and flew to the front. But by this time it was too dark to distinguish one corps from another. I therefore attached myself to the first body of horse which I overtook, and in three minutes found myself in the middle of the enemy.

There was a momentary check, during which the men demanded one of another, what regiment this was. I do not know how the discovery of their own absolute intermingling might have operated, had not an officer called aloud, "Never mind your re-

giments, men, but follow me." In an instant I sprang to his side, and, seeing a mass of infantry close upon us, who, by the blaze of the musketry, we at once recognised to be French, he shouted out "Charge!" and nobly led the way. We rushed on: the enemy fired, and eight of our number fell, among whom was our gallant leader. A musket-ball pierced his heart: he sprang out of his saddle, and fell dead to the ground.

Another check was the consequence, and almost instinctively we recoiled: neither, indeed, was the movement inopportune, for the impetuosity of a mere handful of men had carried them into the middle of a retreating column, and their destruction, had they lingered there must have been inevitable. For myself, having gazed hastily round, and noticed that the field was thickly studded with dung-heaps, I scoured off in search of my own regiment, with which, when it had halted, a good way off, I succeeded in coming

up. But I was determined, as soon as a halt should occur, to return to the spot, and find the body of the slain; and, some hours afterwards, when the word was passed to dismount and rest, I carried my resolution into force.

CHAPTER IV.

The Field of Battle.

It was pitch dark when the acceptable order was issued, of which I have just spoken. It came too at a time when we found ourselves in the very heart of the camp which the French army had occupied on the morning of this eventful day, and very much struck were we by the ingenuity which these brave men had exhibited in their endeavours to render the lodging even of a single night commodious. With wonderful skill they had run up huts formed of the boughs of trees ; the closely-interwoven leaves and branches of which were wellnigh weather

proof ; while within, raw meat of every description,—beef, pork, and mutton, lay scattered about in absolute profusion. So beaten about was it, however, in the hurry of the strife, and in many instances so vilely dressed,—the very hair being left on the morsels of the carcasses, and these but indifferently bled,—that faint as we were for lack of food, we could not bring ourselves to touch it. We flung it from us in disgust, and refused to dress it. But the cravings of hunger are not to be stifled; and not a few wandered away from the ranks which they had been ordered to preserve, in the search after food both for themselves and their horses. Among others, I and my comrade went forth upon a cruise; and judging that the means of conveyance might be unattainable if we went on foot, we quietly drew the girths so soon as a convenient opportunity offered, and rode away. I never shall forget, so long as memory remains by me, the adventures of that extra-

ordinary night. In the first place, the ground withersoever we went, was literally strewed with the wreck of the mighty battle. Arms of every kind,—cuirasses, muskets, cannon, tumbrils, and drums, which seemed innumerable, cumbered the very face of the earth. Intermingled with these were the carcasses of the slain, not lying about in groups of four or six, but so wedged together, that we found it, in many instances, impossible to avoid trampling them where they lay under our horses' hoofs. Then, again, the knapsacks, either cast loose or still adhering to their owners, were countless. I confess that we opened many of these latter, hoping to find in them money, or articles of value, but not one—which I at least examined—contained more than the coarse shirts and shoes that had belonged to the dead owners, with here and there a little package of tobacco, and a bag of salt. And what was worst of all, when we dismounted to institute this search,

our spurs for ever caught in the garments of the slain, and more than once we tripped up, and fell over them.

It was indeed a ghastly spectacle, which the feeble light of a young moon rendered, if possible, more hideous than it would have been, if looked upon under the full glory of a meridian sun. For there is something frightful in the association of darkness with the dwelling of the dead; and here the dead lay so thick and so crowded together, that by-and-by it seemed to us as if we alone had survived to make mention of their destiny.

There are those, I doubt not, who will shudder when I acknowledge, that men circumstanced as we were at that moment, know little or nothing of the magnanimous feelings which in more peaceful hours take up their dwelling in the human heart. It is one of the worst results of a life of violence, that it renders such as follow it selfish and mercenary: at least, it would be ridiculous

to conceal that when the bloody work of the day is over, the survivor's first wish is to secure, in the shape of plunder, some recompence for the risks which he has run and the exertions which he has made. Neither does it enter into the mind of the plunderer to consider whether it is the dead body of a friend or of a foe from which he is seeking his booty. I may be blamed, but I should deserve a double portion of censure were I to deny that my thoughts were fixed mainly on the brave man whom I saw fall, as has been described in the previous chapter; and that my object in seeking him out was to possess myself of his watch and gold seals—the latter of which I had seen glance in the twilight when he dropped. I had made what I conceived an accurate memorandum of the field in which he struck his last blow, and raised his last war-cry, and finding that the crowds near at hand offered nothing worth our acceptance, I suggested to my

companion that we should seek him out. Accordingly, we mounted and rode off, and in due time arrived where heaps of manure were piled up, beside one of which I knew that he was lying. I had not deceived myself: close beside the bodies of eight common troopers we found him. But other marauders had been on the prowl before us, for he was stripped to the very skin. Poor fellow! I saw where the ball had entered—exactly in the middle of the chest; and I own that I then experienced something like relief from the thought that I had been saved the sin—for such I now conceive that it would have been—of robbing him.

Sobered, if not disheartened, by this disappointment, we at once turned our faces homewards. But though it had been easy to quit the camp, we now found that it would be a more difficult operation to regain it; for we lost our way, and were soon wandering we knew not whither, though still

through a very crowd of slaughtered men. At last, we halted in despair, and, picketing our horses, lay down upon the earth and fell asleep. But the instinct of soldiers is remarkable : at early dawn we woke again ; and then, being really anxious that our jaded animals might obtain some refreshment, we looked eagerly round, in the hope that we might be able to discover some traces of a peaceful dwelling. We were not disappointed in this : at a considerable distance to the left, we discovered a house, which, having been set on fire the day previous, was still burning, and towards it, as fast as the nature of the ground would allow, we directed our steps. How frightful the whole scene ! It was, indeed, a field of carnage over which we passed ; and the smell of blood, as it rose upon the morning air, well-nigh sickened us.

The house of which I am speaking, stood upon what had been the right of the position

of the French army, and marked the point where the Prussians first fell in, when late in the evening they arrived to support us. The road which ran near it was blocked up with the cannon which, in the hurry of the flight, the enemy had abandoned; and round them, and before and behind, were heaps of slain—some of which had fallen under the fire of the Prussians, others by the hands of our own men, who met them in their retreat and cut them down. With some difficulty we passed these wrecks of the battle, and entering the farmyard, found it crowded with wounded wretches—some of whom had evidently received their hurts where they now lay, while others seemed to have dragged themselves thither in the hope of shelter. We could not shut our ears to their frightful cries, yet we were powerless to aid them; and what was to the full as mortifying, nothing of which we were in search lay here. We could not find so much as a drop of wa-

ter wherewith to moisten our own lips or those of our horses, so we soon abandoned it, and made for another habitation, which stood at no great distance off. Here we trusted that we should be more fortunate, for the tide of war seemed to have spared this dwelling, and though multitudes of persons went and came from about its doors, we still hoped that we might be in time to secure something. Accordingly, we pushed on, passing under the Observatory, as it has since been called, whence Napoleon is said to have viewed the battle and directed the movements of his columns; and great was our delight to find that not yet had the house or the premises round been thoroughly gutted. To be sure plenty of people were there—some of them, too, peasants of the country, who were helping themselves to sheep, pigs, and bullocks—a whole drove of which we found, to our extreme surprise, penned up in a sort of yard, adjoining to

the farmstead. These live animals did not constitute the booty of which we were in search : we wanted corn and water, and food fit for immediate use ; and corn and water, to our extreme satisfaction, we found, with both of which we plentifully regaled our now famishing chargers.

Leaving the horses to take full advantage of the piece of good fortune which had thus fallen to their share, we entered the house—but neither bread nor any other necessary of life was there. Busy hands had been before ours, for over the floors of the different rooms all manner of wearing apparel was scattered, and drawers broken and ransacked, gave token of the manner in which they had employed themselves. At last I came by chance upon a cupboard which gave no signs of having been rifled, and forcing it open, I saw that it contained some valuable china and cut glass. The sight of these articles recalled to my remembrance that, on the evening

previous to the battle, an officer of my troop had been so lucky as to stumble somewhere upon a bottle of wine, and that in proceeding to drink, when no cup was at hand, he had been obliged to break off the neck, and in so doing lost half of his treasure. I determined to convey to him both a glass and a service of china, and, with this view, made a small selection, which I packed up in a basket. But I was not permitted to carry my good intentions into effect, for, on returning to the stable, we found two Belgian dragoons there, who invited us to partake of a ham which they had discovered; and my appetite being exceedingly sharp, I laid down the basket in order to appease it. Some marauder observed this, and instantly snatched it up; nor had I time to pursue him, for just as I had risen to do so, a general officer galloped into the farm-yard, and instantly there was a cry from all quarters, "Escape as you best can." The general was

loud in his denunciation of the plunderers : he told us that the provost was at hand, and we leaped into the saddle, resolved, if possible, to escape him. And well was it that we did so ; for we had not passed from the gateway many roods, ere he and his guard made their appearance, after which nothing remained for us but to make the best of our way at our briskest speed to the camp.

The intelligence which we brought as to the cattle and sheep which we had seen at the farm-house was not thrown away. Party after party sallied out, and in half an hour there was mutton enough in our lines to furnish all with a substantial meal. In a trice the cooks went to work, and by-and-by might be seen officers and men devouring the half-dressed food like cannibals. Neither were any questions asked concerning the sources from which a supply so acceptable came : all were anxious to partake of it, and all, when the repast was ended, looked

and felt as if each were worth at least half a dozen of what he had been two hours previously.

The first wants of nature being thus satisfied, parties were sent out, under non-commissioned officers, to search for and bring in such wounded men as might have fallen in the woods, or on broken ground, where they could not easily be discovered. Scores of human beings, who but for this humane proceeding must have perished, were thus snatched from the jaws of death—among whom were not a few mere boys, the whole of whom appeared to entertain of us, and especially of the surgeons, the most pitiable dread. It required, indeed, in several instances, two or three of us to hold the patient while the balls were extracted from his wounds and his hurts dressed; and then the gratitude of the unfortunate beings became as vehement as previously to the completion of the operation

their fears had been ludicrous. Neither did we find it easy for some time afterwards to shake ourselves free from these convalescents. Though told they were at liberty to return to their homes, they would not leave us, and even contrived to crawl after us for a march or two, in order, as they said, to avoid the danger of falling into the hands of the Prussians.

It was noon ere the commissary arrived, bringing with him corn, biscuits, salt meat, and an allowance of spirits, the receipt of which proved eminently acceptable both to man and beast; after discussing which we received orders to fall in and march to the front. As we rose the hill an excellent opportunity was afforded of viewing, at a single glance, the whole theatre of these desperate operations. I have already spoken of the particular sights which, in the course of my wanderings over the field, met me;

and I have now only to record that the effect of a grand *coup d'œil* was neither less astounding nor less awful than any which had been produced by the examination of individual objects near at hand. We saw, too, that if the slaughter among the French had been terrible, our gallant army had not come off unscathed. There, on the ground where they had fought, large heaps of English soldiers were scattered, covering, for the most part, the face of their own position, and retaining to a certain extent the very order of their formations; and here, on either side of the road which we were traversing, the pride of the gallant heavy brigade lay low: for the Life Guards, the Royals, and the Greys had been carried by their impetuosity far into the heart of the French lines, and though more than victorious in the charge, were wellnigh cut to pieces. But why continue these details—

a hundred abler pens than mine have told the story of their prowess and their suffering. I cannot add to the amount of information already possessed by the public—so let me change my subject.

CHAPTER V.

The Advance.

WE marched that day some distance on the road to Nivelle, and arriving towards dark at a very pretty village, we halted for the night in an orchard. There we remained the whole of the next day, cleaning our swords and accoutrements, which were covered with rust, and giving to our horses the rest and refreshment of which they stood sorely in need. As to our clothing, that was completely spoiled, and our boots we were obliged to cut from our legs, ere we could get them off. But four-and-twenty hours of repose and good feeding did won-

ders for us, and on the 20th we resumed our progress, in high spirits and very tolerable order. A succession of easy stages carried us to Catieaux, where we established ourselves in a pleasant grove, waiting for the arrival of the pontoons and heavy artillery, which might be required to reduce the fortresses that lay in our front; and I am forced to say that the three days which we spent there were not wasted. Not far from our encampment lay a large village, which, on reconnoitring it, we found to be abandoned; and, as the foolish people had left all their effects behind them, we saw no reason why we should not save the camp-followers some trouble, by appropriating them to our own use. The consequence was, that our meals were not only abundant but sumptuous;—fowls, geese, turkeys, ducks, pigs, rabbits, and flour and garden-stuff in abundance, furnished forth, with wine and beer, our daily tables; and it would be in-

justice to all parties did I not add, that we dealt with them as those are wont to do who, having known what it is to fast by compulsion, take care, when the opportunity offers, to feast with hearty good will.

It was my especial delight to wander through the woods adjoining our encampment alone; on one of which occasions I encountered the adjutant, who, after telling me that he had looked for me for some time, asked whether I could speak French. I was not without apprehension that something might have gone wrong, so I answered in the negative. Upon which he replied, "Don't you think you could get out a few words in that language, if you were paid an extra franc a day?" "I dare say I could, sir," replied I, smiling. "Oh, I thought so," was the answer; "so come along with me." I followed the adjutant accordingly, and found that I had been selected to act as serjeant in a mounted staff corps, of which

it would be the duty to protect the country people from ill usage, and to repress, along the route of the army, every thing like plundering and violence. From each regiment in the brigade three men were chosen, over whom I was set; and the orders which I received were, that I should detach six, three on each flank, during the march, and myself bring up the rear with the remaining three. We were not to act as executioners, nor yet as a provost guard, but simply as a military police;—that is to say, we were to arrest all persons whom we might find marauding, and to hand them over to the provost for punishment. And in order to make us known, as well as to ensure for us the respect of our fellow-soldiers, each man was supplied with a scarlet belt, which he was desired to pass over his right shoulder, and to regard as a badge of honourable distinction.

It will readily be believed that I accepted the distinction thus proffered to me, thank-

fully, the more so as I found that it carried an addition of two francs daily to my pay, and one franc to each of the men who were placed under me. Neither had I any cause to repent of the arrangement. On the contrary, I more than once found myself in a position to render essential service to the helpless, at the same time that I hindered my own people from doing wrong; and of the first instance in which I came to exercise my authority, it may be as well if I give a brief account.

The day after I received my appointment we marched; and I, obeying the instructions that had been communicated to me, dispersed two of my threes on each flank, and with the remaining triad brought up the rear. It might be about noon when we approached a house by the roadside from which lamentable cries, as of people in distress, proceeded. "Serjeant!" exclaimed the colonel, who rode near me, "do you hear

that? Go and see what is the matter." In an instant I called my men, and desiring them to dismount, left one in charge of the horses, while with the other two, sword in hand, I entered. The house was full of Belgian dragoons, who had been plundering and ill-treating the people at a great rate. I told them what my duty was, called upon them to surrender, compelled them to restore to the inhabitants the effects which they had taken, and made a dozen of them prisoners. The remainder fled through the back door, and we saw them no more. I cannot undertake to describe the gratitude of the poor people, whose property, and in some instances more than their property, we thus preserved. Neither have I power to tell how astonished the Belgians were, when they found themselves handed over to a sort of power which was marvellously rapid in the administration of justice. The whole of them were stripped on the instant, and re-

ceived a dozen each—a salutary example—which taught the allies that they, not less than the English, would not by our wise and noble commander be allowed to perpetrate, with impunity, wrongs upon the innocent inhabitants of France, purely because with the French government their own happened to be at war.

We halted that day about noon, not far from a gentleman's house, which I was ordered to protect, and where, with my comrades, I spent the night. Next morning, as a matter of course, the march was resumed. But except that we were joined at a large village, or rather town, through which we passed, by Louis XVIII. and his suite, there occurred nothing of which it is worth while to take especial notice. To be sure, the manner in which the people of the town received the king, whom but a few weeks previously they had driven into banishment, was exceedingly characteristic. Triumphal

arches and green boughs were erected at the head of the principal streets. Beside them stood the magistrates and leading men of the place, as well as a number of gaily-dressed maidens, who strewed flowers in the way of the royal party, and offered bouquets; while the air was rent with discordant shouts, from which no more could be gathered, than that the parties shouting were disposed to make the most of passing events as they occurred. But I must not omit to describe a scene which befel in the same town, and in which I was myself an actor. I have often thought of it since with amazement, and possibly my readers may think with me, that it was at least a strange one.

The brigade halted in this town for the night; and I received a billet on a particular house, to which, as may be supposed—accompanied by my comrade—I immediately repaired. We knocked at the front door, but nobody answered; whereupon we made

our way round to the rear, where, trying the latch, we ascertained that it was not fastened, and immediately entered. We found ourselves in a passage, from which, on the right and left, two doorways diverged. One of these—that on the left—we tried, and were ushered into a small apartment, where, before a table literally covered with gold coins and bags of money, sat a man engaged, as it seemed, in reckoning up the amount of his treasure. The creaking of the door upon its hinges seemed to have disturbed him, for he instantly looked behind; and the expressions of astonishment, fear, agony, and horror which passed in rapid succession over his countenance, I shall never forget. He threw himself at once flat upon the table, stretching out his arms in the vain effort to conceal his wealth; and then, in a tone of voice, which bespoke the extent of his alarm, desired to be informed as to our wishes. I hastened to assure him

that he had nothing to apprehend from us. I told him that we were English, not Prussians; and the announcement at once relieved him so far, that he was able to demand the cause of our intrusion; and on my informing him, he hastened to tell us that we were heartily welcome. He entreated us to go to the kitchen, where his housekeeper would take charge of us; and without so much as pausing to ascertain the amount of his exposed treasure, we at once obeyed. He was a monstrous lucky fellow in having fallen into our hands rather than into those of any of the gallant allies that co-operated with us. We got a good supper, and an excellent bed; but he retained his Napoleons, which, had some of Blucher's dragoons seen them, would have made their way probably to Prussia, at all events to Paris or its environs.

Up to the present point the British army seemed to have followed a route of its own. Our march of the next day brought us upon

the track of the Prussians; and the contrast between our discipline and theirs was curious in the extreme. Our column passed, for example, about noon, a large château, with a village attached; and I and my men were sent, as a matter of course, to protect both. Alas! we came too late. The Prussians had been here before us, and the skill and industry with which they seemed to have carried on the work of devastation I have no language to describe. In the château there was not one article of furniture, from the costly pier-glass down to the common coffee-cup, which they had not smashed to atoms. The flour-mill, likewise, attached to the mansion, was all gutted, the sacks cut to pieces, and the flour wantonly scattered over the road. Stables, cow-sheds, poultry-houses, and gardens, seemed to have been, with infinite care, rendered useless; and as to living things there was none—not so much as a half-starved pigeon—to be seen about the pre-

mises. In like manner, the village was one wide scene of devastation. Its inhabitants appeared, indeed, to have escaped, for we came upon no human being, nor the corpse of any; but furniture, doors, windows, and here and there roofs, all seemed to have passed through the merciless hands of the spoilers. I never beheld such a specimen of war, conducted in a spirit of ferocious hostility. I was half ashamed of the connexion that subsisted between ourselves and the Prussians, when I looked upon the horrid work which they had perpetrated.

Having wandered over this wretched place, and ascertained that our presence was altogether useless, we mounted again, and rode on. Our route lay somewhat apart from that of the column, and carried us towards a wood, on approaching which we were challenged by a peasant, armed with a musket, and determined, as his bearing showed, to dispute our farther progress. I

told him what we were; upon which he instantly recovered his arms, and entreated us to come forward. He became, indeed, our guide, and conducted us to an open space in the forest, wherein were collected the unfortunate fugitives from the very place which we had just abandoned. There they were, men, women, and children, established in a sort of bivouac, whither they had escaped with such little fragments of their property as the alarm of a moment had enabled them to carry off. Poor things! they clustered round our saddle-bows, as if we had been guardian angels sent to protect them from further violence. They offered us all that they had, which, of course, we refused to accept, and gratefully listened to our declarations that, for the present at least, danger had passed away. I have the satisfaction of remembering that, at my suggestion, they gathered up their effects on the instant, and went back to reoccupy the houses from which our

somewhat ferocious friends had driven them. —We rode on, and in due time reached an eminence, just beyond which the column had been directed to halt for the night. We pulled up on the summit to look round us, and saw, a little way removed from the line of march, another village, in which the process of marauding was going on in full vigour. Multitudes of stragglers had broken in upon the inhabitants, who were fleeing in every direction, pursued by their enemies. It was a shocking spectacle; and, as in duty bound, I resolved, as far as my means went, to give to it a different character. I accordingly commanded my party to draw swords, and down we went at full speed into the heart of the village. The effect of our charge was marvellous: the plunderers dropped their booty and fled in all directions. We rode after them, belabouring them with the flats of our swords, and in five minutes had the satisfaction of knowing that order was en-

tirely restored. It is an old aphorism, the truth of which all experience confirms, that good actions invariably bring their own reward. We were not only thanked by the authorities of the place, but feasted and fêted at the principal inn; and we spent the night among these poor people as merrily as those are wont to do whom their entertainers regard as special benefactors.

In this manner I continued my march, giving protection, wherever I and my party arrived, to the persons and property of all orders of Frenchmen, by whom we were uniformly treated as friends and preservers. Such services were not always unattended with personal risk; and once, in particular, we owed our preservation at least as much to our ingenuity, or presence of mind, as to the badges which we carried. We had observed a large mansion, removed by a considerable space from the road, and judging that it would be regarded as a prize by the marau-

ders, we put spurs to our horses, and happily reached it ere any stragglers from the army could come up. I knocked at the door, which we found closed, but nobody answered: I knocked again, but still the signal was disregarded; on which, having previously observed that all the stables were empty, and that not a living thing was to be seen on the premises, I came to the conclusion that the place was abandoned. Under this impression, I had already directed my men to remount for the purpose of proceeding elsewhere, when one of the upper windows opened, and a man, putting his head through, desired to be informed who we were. I replied that we were "English police:" upon which he immediately entreated me to wait, and in a few seconds opened the door for our reception. He was an old gentleman, very venerable in his appearance, and full of alarm—as he well might be—on account of his family and effects, and for his wife and

two daughters, who were in the house with him; for he not unnaturally mistook us for Prussians, of whose mode of dealing, wherever they went, the rumour had already reached him. Finding, however, that our business was to protect, not to fleece him, his gratitude sets my powers of expression at defiance; and the ladies, who soon joined us, were to the full as lavish of their thanks as he.

We had scarcely passed his threshold, when a whole swarm of Belgians made their appearance, flocking up from a village which they had just plundered, and hastening to effect the same end at the château. I determined at once to resist them; so, planting one of my men as a sentry at the door, I drew the rest under cover, and quietly waited to meet the issue, be it what it might. On came the marauders as fast as they could run; and very angry as well as greatly surprised were they to find their further progress disputed

by my sentinel. They peremptorily desired to know what our business was there; and some officers—of whom a good many bore them company—seemed resolute, in spite of the vidette, to force an entrance. Upon this I went out, and told them that we had been sent by the commander-in-chief to take possession of the quarter, and that his arrival there, with the Staff of the Army, was every moment to be expected. The effect upon these gentlemen was electrical: they repeated my tale to the men; gave the word to fall in; were obeyed with marvellous celerity, and marched off without doing the slightest damage to any thing. Their departure relieved the old gentleman at once from all his anxiety, and induced him to cast every thing like disguise aside. About twenty peasants, well armed, accordingly came forth from their hiding-places. Horses, cattle, poultry, were in like manner released; and, in ten minutes, the château, with all the out-

buildings attached to it, gave signs of ample vitality and very great abundance. We, of course, and our horses, were treated to our hearts' content—besides receiving a warm invitation to visit the family again as often as opportunities might offer; and, finally, we did not quit the place till a thousand proofs had been afforded that, in the faithful discharge of the duties assigned to us, we had done real service to those who needed it.

In this manner I continued my march, day by day gladdened by the thought that I had been the means of preserving many an innocent family from wrong, and many a village as well as château from total destruction. At last, the head-quarters of the army reached Neuilly, where and around which an extensive encampment was formed. It was from the high grounds near the village that I obtained my first view of Paris; and its gilded domes and spires, and innu-

merable minarets, impressed me, as well as the prodigious extent of its area, with sensations of profound admiration. I acknowledge, too, that I thought, not without pity, of the state of public feeling as it must have then operated in the city—where, from hour to hour, the advance of hostile columns was anticipated, and men could count on no other result than that their streets would become the scenes of strife. Yet the halt which we made appeared to promise better things, and the going and coming of frequent flags of truce told a tale of negotiations in progress. To be sure, the horizon seemed at one time entirely overcast; for a corps of French troops, which occupied Montmartre, refused to fall back when required to do so, and were instantly attacked and driven from their positions by a portion of our infantry. But except on that occasion, no fighting took place, though the outposts of the hostile armies wellnigh touched

one another, and on both sides the extreme of vigilance was by night and day exhibited.

While we lay in this place, which, being of limited extent, afforded but inadequate accommodation even to the head-quarter staff, I found myself involved in a little adventure, of which, because of the interest which it excited in me at the moment, I may as well give some account.

I was late of reaching Neuilly—so late, indeed, that when I came up the place was crowded. I reported myself to the commanding officer, showing that all was right, and received from him directions to pass the night in the streets—unless, indeed, I should prefer crossing to a town which lay on the farther side of the river. There would, however, be some risk attendant on this move, because the tricolour still floated from one of its public buildings, and the impression was, that the French had not yet

withdrawn from the place. Not relishing, however, the prospects of a night spent in fasting and the open air, I proposed to four of my people—Germans, belonging to an hussar regiment—that we should reconnoitre the town together. I found them quite ready to share the enterprise with me, and towards the river-side we accordingly proceeded.

We found that the bridge was barricaded on both sides; though in both barricades openings had been made sufficiently large to admit of the passing of a man and horse. We therefore rode through, when, leaving two of the men to keep guard at the farther side, I took the remaining two with myself, and advanced with great caution and deliberation towards the town. The first object that met our eyes, on approaching the main street, was a huge tricoloured flag, which waved over the barracks of the Chasseurs of the National Guard on an eminence hard by. As may be supposed, the vision had

not the effect of rendering us less cautious; nevertheless, on we went—neither seeing nor hearing any thing. In fact, the town was deserted. We rode quite through—passing up one street and returning by another—and then trotted off to make our comrades aware of how matters stood, and to join them with ourselves in our search after novelties.

We looked out for some respectable cabaret, having made up our minds to establish there our head-quarters; and had not gone far ere the well-known sign of the Bush informed us that our object was attainable. We knocked, but the signal was not regarded: we entered, and saw that the house was as desolate as the street. A fire was burning on the hearth—the clock continued to go—on the counter there stood a jug half filled with wine—and in a cupboard we found a loin of mutton cooked, with a well-dressed salad, both ready to be served up.

We next examined the cellars, which were abundantly stocked with casks, all, as we ascertained by sounding them, full of wine. In a word, it was precisely the sort of domicile of which we were in search, and we made up our minds not to look farther.

The next thing to be thought of was the accommodation of our horses, for which we were not slow in ascertaining that the cabaret could do nothing. I accordingly proceeded to the house adjoining, in the rear of which I found a stable, which, on examination, proved to be fitted up with half a dozen stalls, and abundantly stocked both with forage and litter. I threw the bridle over my mare's neck, and led her towards the door; but she snorted, tossed up her head, and, in spite both of coaxing and punishment, refused to enter. "There must be something uncommon here," exclaimed I, as I seized a fork and ran in. To toss the litter about was but to obey the impulse of

the moment, and there sure enough we found beneath the straw a French soldier, shot through the heart, dead as a stone, but fully accounted. How he could have come there we were at a loss to conjecture. But a practical acquaintance with the events of war has a marvellous effect in stifling men's sympathies on occasions like the present. We lifted the body in our arms, cast it into the river, and having made our horses comfortable in the stalls which they no longer refused to occupy, we returned to the cabaret, nowise indisposed to act with the same praiseworthy consideration towards ourselves.

We ate and drank merrily that night, but committed no excess: indeed, we could not divest ourselves of the suspicion that, after all, a snare might have been laid for us, and the same feeling of half anxiety which hindered us from lying down, operated, among other causes, to keep us sober. Once or twice, moreover, we went abroad, examining

the houses near, and loitering at the corners of streets; but not one sign of human life could we discover: the place was evidently deserted. Accordingly, when dawn came in, I rode across to Neuilly, where many of my comrades met me, and it was agreed among us that we should return in a body, and spend that day as I and my former companions had spent the last. I have nothing to relate of events that befel till towards dusk, when, from my place beside the board, and surrounded by a dozen or more of the 11th, I saw a man peep in at the front door and instantly withdraw again. I sprang up, without speaking a word, and found a poor Frenchman hovering about the threshold, who, not without manifest indications of alarm, told me that he was the master of the house. A sort of general explanation immediately followed. We offered to pay for the provisions which we had taken: he

positively refused to accept a sou; and telling us that his wife and daughter, and, indeed, all the rest of the inhabitants, were concealed in the woods, whither they had fled, he went away at our request to assure them that we were English, not Prussians, and that they might return without scruple to their houses. A happy family was that, so soon as its several members found themselves settled once more under the shadow of their own roof, and the invaders, from whom they had fled, anxious rather to apologize for what was past than to inflict upon them or their property fresh injuries. Indeed, the entire place appeared to change its character as house after house became tenanted, and the light-hearted owners betook themselves to their ordinary occupations. Nor can I pass on to other subjects without recording that the mutual good will which sprang up among us at the outset never suffered a moment's

interruption. Throughout a space of nearly twelve months which I spent in or near Paris, I was always to my friend of the cabaret a welcome guest; and I quitted him and his amiable wife and daughter, at last, not without marks of unaffected sorrow on both sides.

CHAPTER VI.

Paris and its Environs.

ON the 7th of July intelligence reached us that Paris had capitulated, and shortly afterwards the order arrived to march in the direction of the capital. It was not, however, my fortune to witness or participate in the triumphal entrance which our columns made, for, with twenty-seven more mounted men—of all nations, and belonging to all corps—I was detached to protect the château of Bagatelle, in the Bois de Boulogne, where the Duke de Berri resided. It was a charming place, with a park, gardens, terraces, a sheet of water, a Venetian bridge,

artificial rocks and grottoes, and hermitages innumerable. Neither, except on the score of hard duty had we much to complain of, seeing that the duke allowed for our daily use twelve bottles of Burgundy, besides giving us a kitchen-garden, whence at pleasure we might supply our table with vegetables and fruit. But as the rations both for men and horses were distributed only in Paris, the fatigue of fetching them from a point so distant proved often trying enough, especially as our duty required us every evening to patrol by reliefs round the grounds, from sunset till after sunrise on the following morning. Nor, indeed, were these precautions unnecessary. A large encampment had been formed in the wood, from which marauders came forth at all hours, whom nothing except the display of our scarlet belts hindered from reducing the duke's well-kept pleasure-grounds, to the state of a howling wilderness.

I shall never forget the impression that was made upon me the first time I visited Paris. Such a spectacle as the French capital exhibited then, will not, in all human probability come, at least for a while, under the observation of my readers; wherefore I would gladly describe it in detail, could I hope by any power of language to do justice to the subject, but that I feel to be impossible. Of the Champs Elysées, with its noble avenues, its stately trees, and its triumphal arch, I need not say any thing. They, as well as the Palace of the Tuileries, the Place de Concorde, and all the streets and squares adjacent were, I dare say, pretty much what the traveller who visits Paris in 1844 will find them. But the interminable encampments and bivouacs which overspread them—the countless rows of huts which everywhere crowded upon the eye—the unceasing noise of drums, trumpets, clarrions, and other musical instruments—the

hubbub of voices which assailed you, as men of all nations conversed or sported together: these things together with the passing and repassing of thousands of men and women, as if some huge ant-hill had been disturbed, and instead of ants human beings came forth from its recesses, created altogether such a scene as cannot be conceived, unless it has been seen, and is never seen twice in any man's lifetime. For myself I was perfectly astounded, and rode on, with difficulty persuading myself that the whole was other than a dream.

We found the Parisians, particularly the women, civil and even friendly, to the greatest degree. They chattered with us, flirted with us, sold their wares, and took our money with the best grace possible, and gave us in return a plentiful supply of indifferent brandy, served out in marvellously small glasses. We never, however, had much time to spend among them; for the

way was long, and our burdens of forage and provisions weighty. Still a trip to Paris became one of our favourite recreations; and I, as holding rank in my party, found more than one opportunity of going thither when not on duty. For the most part, however, my time was pretty much occupied in attending to the conduct of my men, more than one of whom, as soon as the fruit began to ripen, I caught in the act of plundering. But the Duke de Berri, to do him justice, was extremely considerate on all such occasions, so that the delinquent generally escaped with a few hours incarceration.

While employed on this service, I had more than once the satisfaction of spending a day with my friends at the cabaret near Neuilly. My regiment was quartered in that town, and as often as leisure would permit, I rode over to see them; on which occasions I never failed of meeting from the

good people of the house, the most hearty and affectionate reception. Neither did fortune fail of throwing in my way new acquaintances, from whose gratitude, the means which I possessed of serving them drew forth many solid tokens of regard. I need not tell those who have visited the French capital, that the banks of the Seine, to a great extent below Paris, are covered with vineyards; and probably there will be needed no direct statement from me to make my readers in general believe, that as the fruit began to ripen, the cultivators found it no easy matter to save their harvests from the rapacious hands of the foreign soldiers that were established among them. To such a height, indeed, was the practice of marauding carried, that guards were granted to such townships as applied for them, to protect the vineyards; and even these did not always succeed in hindering serious damage from being done to the pro-

perty of the industrious cultivators. It chanced, that immediately opposite to Bagatelle, though separated from the duke's grounds by the river, lay some very extensive vine-farms. Over and over again they had been invaded, and as much damage done by treading down the vines, as by carrying off the fruit, when the representatives of the village came across and entreated that I would spare some of my men for their protection. I told them, what was true, that I had detached so many in other directions that no more could be spared. But I offered to accompany them to Paris, and to become their spokesman in representing the case to the proper authorities.

To Paris we accordingly went,—the mayor, one or two other functionaries, and myself,—and proceeding direct to the colonel's quarters, I made the circumstances of the case known, and received from him an order to detach two of my men, for the pro-

tection of the parties for whom I had interceded. This was immediately done. I went with the men, gave them their orders, namely to keep watch by turns from dawn to dark, by occupying an eminence whence the country for miles round could be reconnoitred; and to leave it to the peasants themselves to set their armed guards so soon as the night should set in. On the other hand I received from the authorities an assurance, that my men should be well cared for, plenty of good victuals provided for them, and their horses supplied with forage; while, over and above, it was intimated to me, that a cover would be laid for myself every day at the chief auberge in the place; and that whenever I felt disposed to go across, I should partake of the good things which it afforded. All this was very fair; and never once, from the beginning to the end of the harvest weeks, had I or my men the most distant occasion to complain that

our villagers had grown slack in their attentions. On the contrary, as the red band effectually served its purpose, the people's gratitude grew so, that I and my people sometimes found it difficult to reject the favours which they pressed upon us.

At last, however, the harvest was got in, snugly and to as good purpose, as if the foot of the stranger had never defiled the soil of France; and I had already given orders for my people to return, when a deputation from the commune waited upon me to request that I would honour them with my company at the little fête, wherewith it was their custom to celebrate their harvest-home.

I accepted the invitation, as may be supposed, and do not remember having been present, in any part of the world, at a series of entertainments which more interested or amused me. We began with a public breakfast at eight in the morning, to which

about fifty persons, young and old, sat down; after which, on the green, and to the sound of their own band, the lads and lasses danced till two. Then followed a dinner, sumptuous, abundant, and well served up, over which the mayor presided, where the great subject of rivalry, among all who were present, appeared to be how we, the strangers, should be most honoured. There was no lack of excellent wine, nor any disposition to stay the bottle in its progress; indeed we did not rise from table till past five, and many well-applauded toasts had been given. But the pledge of the day was the health of the three English cavaliers, to whom the kind-hearted peasants declared that they were indebted for preservation from famine. Nor was this all: the mayor, after proposing the toast, in terms highly gratifying to us, handed to me three paper packets, which he requested me to divide with the soldiers under my com-

mand, in testimony of the high sense which was entertained in the commune of our services. It was in vain that I besought him not to press upon us favours which were far beyond both our merits and our expectations. We had done no more than our duty, and were glad that we had been instrumental in preserving the property of persons who had given such manifold proofs of their excellence. But the mayor was resolute. He showed, indeed, that my persisting in the rejection of his bounty would have occasioned to him and his townspeople serious annoyance; I was obliged, therefore, to accept the packets, which contained just sixty francs apiece.

Of the habits of the Duke of Berri I have little to record, except that he lived a life of great seclusion, and was, and knew that he was, to the last degree unpopular among his countrymen. He never went from home except at night, and always

returned again with as much privacy as possible, about the same hour on the night following. Why he should have been thus distasteful to the French I cannot conjecture. He has repeatedly honoured me with a few minutes' conversation, and I always found him affable, frank, and condescending; but it is certain that the French people hated him, and that the columns of the newspapers were crowded with stories and assertions to his disadvantage. Of the fate of that unfortunate prince I need not now speak. Even at the period to which my present narrative refers, the probable occurrence of such an event might have been safely predicted; and so fully did the Duke himself appear to be convinced of the fact, that he dwelt, as I have just said, in the strictest and most guarded privacy.

In the course of this autumn there occurred for the amusement of the Allied Sovereigns several grand reviews, at all of

which I was present, rather as a spectator than as an actor. It was my duty, as one of the cavalry staff, to keep the ground, or attend on the officers commanding; and the opportunities thereby afforded me of seeing all that passed were very great. I remember that on one occasion above 8000 British cavalry, and cavalry in British pay, were paraded together. I think that the whole world could produce no such imposing spectacle as they presented; and the heavy brigades in particular,—the Life Guards, the Blues, the Royals, and the Greys, drew forth bursts of spontaneous applause, even from the French populace. Yet there occurred an event which, though ludicrous in the extreme, threatened to produce some serious results, and out of which I am by no means sure that serious results did not here and there arise. The order of the day was to present the semblance of a cavalry action, in which a body of Bruns-

wick horse were posted on one of the roads, to represent the enemy. These stood in front of as dense a crowd of civilians as Paris, and the towns and villages near, may be supposed to have sent forth, while everywhere carriages had taken up their stands, so that the whole area was thronged. The heavy brigade was ordered to dislodge them. They came on at first steadily, covered by their skirmishers; by-and-by they formed line, and the trumpets sounded to trot. Then came the signal to gallop, and to charge; and it was obeyed with such a show of vigour, as fairly upset the common sense of the Brunswickers. A panic seized them: they imagined that they were going to be ridden down; and suddenly wheeling round, they scampered off in all directions, making a way for themselves, without respect of persons, through the middle of the crowd. I defy a stoic to retain his gravity, if he had witnessed the scenes that

followed. There were the people shrieking and running for their lives: there the Brunswickers spurring as if a legion of fiends had been in pursuit of them, and casting over their shoulders, from time to time, looks of the most abject terror. And, finally, there was the heavy brigade, grave as judges, till the trumpet sounded a halt, when, as if an irresistible impulse had come on them, they all burst into a roar of laughter. I never saw such a scene of mirth as that parade ground presented; and unless my memory deceive me, among the heartiest laughers of all were the Duke himself and the Emperor of Russia.

In the month of September of this year I bade adieu to the château of Bagatelle, and moved with my little detachment into Paris. I got a billet on a gentleman of the name of Vandamme, an apothecary in large practice, who resided in the Rue St. Honoré, and proceeding to deliver it was in-

formed that there was no room in the house for my accommodation. My host, however, offered terms in lieu of what the law allowed me, which I did not think that it would be judicious to refuse. He gave me five francs a day, wherewith to provide board and lodging; and the lodging being furnished with an excellent stable, in which my horse was put up, I managed, out of my daily allowance, to fare sumptuously at one of the restaurants.

I am not going to describe Paris, or its endless places of public amusement. Were the subject fresh, instead of being absolutely stale, I could not flatter myself with possessing skill enough] to bring the strange picture vividly before the reader's eye; and such a picture, if not vividly painted, had better not be painted at all. Every body knows how matters are managed within the precincts of the Palais Royal,—how vice walks abroad undisguised and unblushing,—how

the gaming-tables are thronged, and other scenes enacted, of which even to speak in English society would cover the cheek with blushes. Again, the Louvre, with its treasures, gathered from every nation under heaven, was, in the days of which I now speak, a spectacle such as the eye of man will never, in all probability, look upon again. To be sure the splendour of this scene did not long continue after it had become to me an object of daily admiration. Each of the nations of continental Europe claimed the treasures of which the French had despoiled them; and by the Allied Sovereigns and Chiefs orders were issued to restore to the several claimants the masterpieces to the possession of which they could establish their right. The French were excessively annoyed by the promulgation of these orders; so much so, indeed, that resistance to their execution was anticipated, and an overwhelming force of all arms was

warned to be in readiness, for the purpose of putting down the first movement towards sedition. But not a finger was stirred. Multitudes of *anciens militaires* walked to and fro about the streets, chafing and giving vent to their wrath in impotent "*sacres*," but the feeblest attempt to create a disturbance was never offered, and paintings and statues departed from Paris with much less of ostentation than had marked their entrance. I believe that I was John Bull enough somewhat to chuckle over this consummation of a war begun for the purpose of subjugating Old England; and yet I am not sure now that the impulse was a wise one which caused me to triumph. For the purposes of art such a variety of models can never again be collected into one place. Possibly it may be a matter to be regretted that, even for the sake of wounding the vanity of the French, they were ever dispersed again.

It is not, however, to be supposed that I,

a poor non-commissioned officer, sought for amusement only in the visits which I paid to the Palais Royal and the Louvre. The theatres, one after another, were by me frequented, and many a place of public amusement besides, of which my reader, were I to attempt any thing like a description, might be apt to think that I should have acted more prudently had I held aloof from it. But I must not forget to mention that at these haunts of vice numerous quarrels sprang up between the English officers and the officers of the reduced French army. The consequences of these were almost always duels, in which many lives were lost; till, in the end, the grievance became so heavy that both the Duke of Wellington and the French government interfered to put a stop to it.

On more than one occasion during my residence in Paris, I found that my knowledge of the French language—the result of

my three years' captivity—served me in excellent stead. For example, having been removed from my pleasant dependence upon Mr. Vandamme, I was introduced into the family of a silk-merchant, whose wife, by the by, was an Englishwoman, and where I was treated throughout with the most marked attention. From these good people I learned much, which I should have never known otherwise, concerning the state in which the inhabitants of the capital were kept, while as yet authentic information concerning the issues of the Waterloo campaign failed to reach them. At first, it appeared, two despatches were received from Napoleon's headquarters, which gave an account of the battle of Ligné, and the total overthrow of the Prussian army. These were greeted by a general illumination, and such displays of rejoicing, as set all the Parisians, whether of high or humble rank, agog. By and by came accounts of the affair of Quatre Bras

which described the English as totally annihilated; and stated that, in two days from the date of the communication, the emperor expected to establish his head-quarters at Brussels. Next day came a third despatch, full, as the former had been, of promise, though speaking, strangely enough, of a second meeting with the obstinate islanders. And here followed a pause, of the agonizing nature of which my informants assured me that it was impossible for human language to convey an adequate idea. After this all was trepidation, anxiety, and distrust. Hour by hour, and minute by minute, crowds assembled at the post-office, and at every point where it was supposed that information might be obtained; and when none came, their spirits sank in a degree altogether proportionate to the height to which they had previously been raised. Finally, stragglers and fugitives began to pour in: and then such a revulsion of feeling took place, as those

alone can conceive who have found themselves denizens of a great city, which having seen a mighty army march forth from its walls full of dreams of conquest, find themselves suddenly bereft of all protection, and expect from one minute to another the arrival among them of a cruel and vindictive enemy, flushed with conquest, and thirsting for revenge and for plunder.

Having remained here some little time, I was sent to Marli, for the purpose of protecting the royal game in the park, with which, it appeared, that both officers and men of the Allied Armies made abundantly free. I was again put in charge of a party; and at the house of the steward, a M. Peron,—a relative, and not very remote, I believe, of the famous Indian general,—I spent some weeks greatly to my own satisfaction. Nothing could exceed the liberality with which our table was served: indeed, we ate our meals every day with the family; and

when seasons of rejoicing came round—such as Christmas and New-year's-day — we entered heartily into all their amusements. Of Christmas I have little to observe, for it seemed to me to be spent somewhat gravely ; but New-year's-day was, in every sense of the term, a festival. Then all the domestics dined at the same table with the master and mistress; and enormous as the amount of viands was, the whole were cleared away ere the company rose. Next followed a game, somewhat similar to our Twelfth-night gambols, during which a king and queen were chosen, and treated with all conceivable deference; while waltzes, quadrilles, and dances of every kind, kept all ranks, degrees, and ages, astir till daylight. I must confess that the terms of easy yet respectful familiarity, on which the upper and lower classes in that well-regulated family lived, struck me as being delightful. Perhaps we could not, consistently with the order of our

education and manners, transplant it without risk into this country; yet, I deceive myself, if any right-minded Englishman has ever looked upon a scene of the kind, without wishing that its occurrence were as habitual here as in the land where he may be sojourning as a visiter.

It is not worth while to describe the adventures which befel me while acting in the capacity of gamekeeper to the royal family of France. I have had strange meetings with men of all ranks, English as well as foreigners; and, by steadily yet respectfully doing my duty, I am not aware that I made any of them my enemies. Neither shall I speak at large of an affair which threatened at one time to lead to serious consequences, when some French park-keepers shot a dog belonging to the First Dragoon Guards, which they found one day poaching, as was his wont, in their rabbit-burrow. The dog, it appeared, belonged to no one in particular.

He had followed the regiment from England, —was a prodigious favourite,—had gone through the battle of Waterloo, charging uniformly in front of the line, and, after the battle was over, made his appearance as usual beside the fire of the main-guard, where he was welcomed as a highly-favoured guest. He followed his own regiment, of course, to St. Germain's; and, being of the lurcher breed, was in the habit of running down both hares and rabbits, which he uniformly carried home for the use of the men, who fed him. I need scarcely say how furious the regiment was when intelligence of the death of poor Soldier reached them; or how, with one consent, the troopers vowed to take vengeance on the murderer, to whom, by some chance or another, they had obtained a clue. I do not know how long they might have watched for their opportunity, but at last they found it; and sure enough the unfortunate wretch was set

upon in the streets, and very severely beaten. But as good fortune would have it, I happened to come up at the time. I instantly ran among them; assured them that he was not the man; got him out of their hands, though not till after he had suffered severely, and escorted him home. If I had been a favourite with the steward before this, I rose by many degrees higher in his good graces afterwards. Indeed, the whole corps of foresters treated me henceforth as a brother; and many a merry evening I spent, in consequence, at their several lodges.

Once, while I lay here, there arrived from Paris a royal shooting-party, which consisted of the Duke de Berri, the Duke d'Angouleme, Monsieur the Comte d'Artois, and about a score besides of the chief nobles and grandees of France. The order of the day's sport, though now familiar enough in this country, struck us Englishmen as being curious; for the sportsmen took no trouble,

being content to post themselves in the centre of a wood, where an open space had been created by felling the trees, and towards which, from the surrounding copses, several rides or broad paths conducted. Meanwhile a multitude of beaters drove up the game all round, which, as the poor animals ran into the open space, were shot down with great diligence. I observed that the distinguished tirailleurs did not so much as take the trouble to load their own pieces: each was attended by a servant, who charged a reserve gun, and handed it to his master, so that the firing was continued, and the slaughter very great. Among other animals killed that day were two wild boars. Of the total number I can say no more than that they loaded several light waggons.

CHAPTER VII.

Quit Paris under peculiar Circumstances—Cambray;
Adventures there—The Suicide.

It was now the spring of 1816, by which time France had submitted to the terms which the Allies proposed; and, among other arrangements, it was agreed upon that Paris and its immediate environs should be evacuated. A strong army was, indeed, to remain, for the purpose of securing the fulfilment of the conditions of peace, and consolidating the throne for the Bourbons; but its divisions were to find their quarters in towns nearer to the frontiers, so as to leave the interior of France free to the exercise of

its own usages. In accordance with these arrangements, I one day received my route, so suddenly that there was not time so much as to see and bid farewell to my kind host, who chanced to be from home; but I took a last meal with his wife and family, in great affection, if not in the highest spirits; and parted from them, when it was over, amid many, and I believe sincere, protestations of regret on both sides.

I rejoined my regiment the evening previous to the commencement of the march of the whole English army towards their quarters. I was left, however, behind, with two men, to see the last of the baggage packed, and to escort it all the way to Cambray, where the head-quarters of the corps were to be established. Two waggons were placed at our disposal, one of which we loaded early in the day, while the other, by reason of the non-arrival of some of the officers' traps, continued to stand empty.

Had the waggoner merely murmured I could not have blamed him. The delay was provoking enough for him as well as for us; but when he avowed his determination to draw off, I knew my duty too well to permit it; so I told him, in peremptory language, that he must wait my orders. Being anxious, nevertheless, to save both him and myself trouble, I resolved to go in search of the missing articles, and, mounting my horse, placed one of my men as a sort of sentry over the waggoner, with strict orders not on any account to permit his escape.

I had not been long gone ere our friend, Jean Crapot, began to give signs of a vehement disposition to escape. He flogged his horses and moved forward, whereupon my trusty vidette, after vainly protesting against the move, drew his sword, and commanded the deserter to halt. The screams of the waggoner, who no sooner beheld the flash

of the steel than he shrieked out, soon drew a crowd around them. The crowd called loudly for the municipal guard, and in five minutes my friend Billy Duff, a little old man belonging to the 8th Hussars, was surrounded by some dozen or two of armed men, who pointed their weapons towards him, and covered him with a very choice shower of French abuse. At the same time the officer commanding this party drew his sword and attacked Billy, who, to do him justice, behaved with admirable coolness, being content to parry, without returning, the thrusts that were made at him. I shrewdly suspect, however, that honest Billy, would have practised that day his last trick of fence had I not opportunely arrived to his assistance. I instantly desired him to lower his weapon, well knowing that resistance from both of us would have been useless; and the rascally French-

men sprang upon him forthwith, wrested his sword from him, and made him their prisoner.

I was very indignant, as may be easily believed, and protested against the proceeding; but no one paid the least regard to me. The cowards knew that the English army was gone, and they resolved to have their spite out against the few stragglers that remained. Accordingly Billy was dragged off, amid their yells and execrations, to the guard-house, where he was by-and-by conveyed as a prisoner before the French field-officer of the day. I confess that I was at my wits' end. On the one hand I did not know where to turn for help, on the other, I was resolved that Billy should not be deserted; so, buckling on my sword, which I had heretofore left in my quarters, I ran where I knew were the adjutant's lodgings, scarcely venturing to hope that I should have the good fortune to find him. As sometimes

happens, however, in cases of emergency, Fortune stood my friend. He was in the very act of mounting his horse when I arrived, and at once agreed to go with me to the municipal guard. I have no language sufficiently strong wherewith to describe the insolence of the crew that were on duty there. They led us through a long passage, flourishing Billy's sword over their heads, as if it had been a standard taken in some general action, and introduced us into the presence of the commanding officer, in terms to which his own insolent manner entirely responded. It was to no purpose that the adjutant demanded the release of the man. They would not give him up till he should have been led as a prisoner before the commandant of the town, and his crime regularly entered in the black book. For poor Billy's crime, according to their showing, was that he had drawn his sword against a peaceable citizen ; whereas he had simply done his

duty, by using the means which every sentinel is supposed to have at his disposal, for hindering his post from being violated, or a prisoner put under his charge from escaping.

Having come to the determination of laying a charge against Billy before the English authorities, the officer of the guard put his prisoner under the escort of a serjeant and six men, and gave orders that he should be marched to the quarters of Colonel Kelly, who had been nominated military commandant of Paris. I went with my comrade, as in duty bound, and came in for my own share of the insults and threats with which a crowd, accumulating from street to street, seemed anxious to overwhelm us. Neither were they content to cover us with abuse; they closed in upon the escort, made a snatch at my sword, which with much difficulty I retained, spat upon us, and repeatedly exclaimed that we ought to be put to death. In a word, our progress was one

not merely of vexation but of imminent hazard throughout. Neither were our prospects much brighter when we attained to the end of our journey. For, though Colonel Kelly's baggage crowded the courtyard, he himself had quitted his apartments, and it seemed more than probable that we should be left, after all, to the tender mercies of the French people. From such a fate, which must have been a trying one, our better angel saved us. As we were marching back to the guard-house I observed in one of the cross-streets a carriage standing, which I knew to be Colonel Kelly's; and by-and-by he came, with his lady, from a shop, and was about to enter. I called out to him. We were led up. The written charge was handed in, read, signed, returned with a smile; after which he told the escort they might go, and he would look after the prisoners. "Now, my lads," said he, as soon as the Frenchmen had de-

parted, "get back to your stables as fast as you can, and make your escape out of the city. The troops are all on the march; I will not be answerable for your safety here." We needed no second bidding. Making choice of all manner of by-lanes, we reached our billet unobserved; and the horses being saddled and the baggage gone, we instantly mounted. In less than an hour we were clear of Paris, and on the evening of the sixth day overtook the regiment at Cambray.

I had begun by this time to grow weary of service in the staff-corps, I therefore applied for and obtained permission to rejoin my regiment, which occupied Bergen, in Dutch Flanders, and the villages round, and lived on the best and most friendly terms with the natives. It was here that the Waterloo medal was served out to us,—which the colonel graced with a long and eloquent speech, besides granting us three days of en-

tire exemption from duty, and himself, with the rest of the officers, presenting us with a very handsome gratuity in money. It is scarcely worth while to relate how the money went, or after what fashion the days of fête were expended. The Flemings are nowise backward in their cans,—as all who know them will testify; but I suspect they never beheld such wassailing as gave a character to the three days in question. Still the results were by no means injurious either to them or to us. We feasted them all, gave dances to their wives and daughters, and won their hearts by our liberality. I am sure, at least, that from that time forth we lived together on the most friendly terms,—and that when we quitted them they deplored our removal as if ties of close consanguinity had united us.

There occurred while we lay here two adventures—both of them serious, one fatal—of which I may as well make mention.

We were a good deal scattered about, in small parties, and under numerous commands—forage being, as it seemed, scarce; or, if not, the Duke being naturally desirous to press as lightly as possible, in its exaction, on the inhabitants. I was one of fourteen who, under one Serjeant Ford, occupied the village of Morqueon; and there was another detachment at a place called Fellay, near Arras, of which a corporal had charge. One day Serjeant Ford received a letter from Fellay, to inform him that the men stationed there were extremely uncomfortable, and to request that he would ride over, and endeavour, by his influence with the mayor, to obtain for them better treatment. I volunteered to accompany the serjeant, and away we went.

A few hours' ride carried us to the village; and, on inquiring for the house where the English troops were quartered, it was immediately shown to us. We entered, and

found the whole party seated round a table, on which stood several flasks of brandy, and glasses in proportion, while the landlord seemed bent on making them drink their fill—he, by the way, sedulously setting the example. This was by no means the sort of spectacle by which we expected to be greeted, and we stared at one another not a little astounded, which the landlord no sooner observed than he addressed to us marks of his most particular attention. He assured us that everybody then within his gates drank at his expense; that we could not oblige him more than by making the most of his good cheer; and that he should not be contented till we had drained his cellar, which he should take care to replenish whenever the convenient moment came. Soldiers are seldom backward in doing honour to an invitation such as this; so down we sat in the chairs pulled out for us, and I am bound to add that, for a couple of hours, the scene

was as curious, yet as sociable and merry, as mortal eye need rest upon.

Our comrades of the corporal's party, who appeared to have had nearly enough ere we arrived, filed off by degrees, one after another, to their beds: the serjeant likewise retired; but our host, whose thirst seemed to be unquenchable, kept his place, and insisted upon it that I should not leave him. At length, however, the liquor took such effect upon him that he became quite mad. All of a sudden he seized a burning beam, and made a blow at my head, which with some difficulty I eluded. I disarmed him instantly; upon which he sprang up, ran to a closet, and, snatching a pistol, began to load it. Happily for me, one of my brother-soldiers still dozed upon his chair; and he, on my shouting out, rushed upon the madman, and wrenched the weapon from his hold. But he was bent upon mischief: he armed himself with a heavy brazen candlestick, and

striking me a blow on the forehead, laid me senseless on the floor. It is not worth while to continue the relation of a mere—yet a desperate—riot. It ended in the man of the house escaping, we could not tell where,—and I having been put to bed, all seemed over.

It was not so, however: Serjeant Ford, annoyed at what had occurred, and apprehending that a false tale might reach headquarters, got out of bed, and lodged a complaint against the landlord at the police-office. He was arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, besides paying a fine of seven hundred francs to the Crown. But the most curious piece of the business remains to be told: not only did he bear me no ill-will, but both he and his wife, when I saw them again some time after his release, thanked me for all that had happened; for the effect of his punishment was, to cure him of his propensity

to drinking, and he became from that time a respectable and sober man. So much for the administration of justice in Dutch Flanders. I never saw a criminal prosecution more fairly and honestly conducted: I never heard, except in this particular instance, of punishment being followed by effects so beneficial.

The other adventure, of which I have to speak, was by many degrees more tragical; for it ended in the death of one of the finest young men in the 11th Light Dragoons. Serjeant Tongue, connected, I believe, with a highly-respectable family, and himself singularly handsome and of a good address, was yet the slave of a temper so violent and ungovernable, that he ceased, when irritated, to be, to a great extent, at least, master of himself. He had formed an attachment to a very pretty girl, the daughter of the mayor of Moul; and the young lady made no secret in any quarter that she returned his love.

It happened once upon a time that a fête was to take place in the village; and Tongue, having engaged his lady-love to be his partner in the dance, looked forward with great eagerness to the accomplishment of his wishes. Unfortunately for him, he was detained in his quarters beyond the hour at which the dancing was to begin, and when he entered the ball-room, he beheld to his unspeakable chagrin, that his partner had given her hand to another. This was a French hussar, the son of the publican at whose house the fête was held—a fine, gay, well-dressed youth—who, with a comrade, had come over from a neighbouring village where they were quartered, and seeing the mayor's daughters sitting by, claimed the right to dance with them. I was told that their doing so was quite in agreement with the usages of the country, neither do I doubt the truth of the statement; but Tongue saw the matter in a different light. He stood, with folded arms,

watching them as they swept round. He observed, or fancied, that the hussar used freedoms with the maiden, such as his English sense of decorum could not tolerate, and he lost all self-command. He ran home to his quarters, loaded a pistol with two blank cartridges, and, bidding me and another man put on our swords, rushed back to the ball-room.

We followed him, of course, scarce knowing what was meant; but the moment I observed the situation of his partner, my mind misgave me. I would have interfered, and done my best to lead him away; but ere I could make a step in advance, the music ceased, and Tongue, springing forward, seized the French hussar by the collar. A frightful scene followed: he did not fire, but, holding the pistol cocked, he struck the young man some severe blows with the muzzle, and dragged him through the room, looking all the while more like a maniac than a

sane person. It was to no purpose that the farmers, by whom he was greatly beloved, tried to appease him. He continued to strike and drag the unfortunate Frenchman through the room, till one of the company, unfortunately, threw his arms round Tongue's neck, and endeavoured to extricate the hussar from his grasp. It was an unwise act: during the scuffle that ensued, the pistol exploded, and the young hussar fell to the ground terribly wounded.

As Providence would have it, the muzzle had turned obliquely from its object when the explosion took place. The consequence was, that the powder made no breach in his body, but it burned his clothes, scorched the whole side of his abdomen, and appeared to all the lookers-on to have killed him. In an instant, Tongue's senses seemed to return: he was overwhelmed with anguish and remorse; and though the generous young hussar assured him that, come what would, no

more should ever be said about the matter, he never smiled afterwards. The wounded man was conveyed to bed, and medical assistance sent for. The villagers, with whom Tongue was an especial favourite, entreated him to think no more about the matter; and the mayor himself was the first to put his name to a paper, in which the circumstance of the wound was attributed entirely to accident: but Serjeant Tongue continued inconsolable. At last, one day when the serjeant-major came to visit us, and Tongue with myself was attending him in his inspection of the men's quarters, our poor comrade, pretending sudden illness, ran home to his own quarters. We did not suspect any thing—at least the serjeant-major did not—neither had I the most remote idea of what was really intended; wherefore our horror may be conceived, when, on repairing to his billet, we found a letter, addressed to the serjeant-major, on his table. It contained a

statement of the mental agony which for many days the writer had experienced, and ended with a declaration that he meant to destroy himself. We ran to the stables, and there learned from one of the men that he had gone into the orchard, carrying both his pistols with him, as if for the purpose of shooting sparrows. We followed him thither, and saw him sitting in a dry ditch, and the pistols beside him. Instantly, on perceiving us, he sprang up, and presenting one of the pistols at us, charged us, as we valued our lives, not to advance a step nearer. The serjeant-major, who was a feeling and humane man, threw himself on his knees, and entreated Tongue to cast the weapons from him, and to listen to reason; but the poor fellow only shook his head and smiled bitterly. One of the pistols he did fling away; he then planted his back against a tree, and placing the muzzle of the other in his own mouth, blew his head to pieces.

I shall never forget the horror of that scene, nor the deep and universal mourning that followed. For the young French hussar was by this time recovering fast, and never uttered one word of reproach, far less of threatening, against his rival. But the deed was done; so there remained for us only the painful duty of giving the rites of sepulture to his remains—which we did, Lieutenant Wood reading the service over him, and the whole detachment attending as sincere, though not as formal, mourners.

CHAPTER VIII.

Change of Quarters—Adventures in Different Parts—
Return to England.

OUR next station was in and around Arras; during our occupation of which, there occurred a grand review, or sham-battle, on the plains of Valenciennes. Of the great plain in question I need scarcely speak. While the summer crops cover its surface it is not destitute of beauty, for vegetation is abundant ; and vegetation, look on it where you may, is always beautiful; but a more miserable scene than it offers to the eye after the crops are gathered in, I have seldom had the misfortune to behold. There are no

cheerful villages looking forth from the woods that embower them—no healthful and merry peasantry moving about—but far and wide, beyond the reach of the sense of vision, lies one huge waste, where the very roads, so soon as the rains set in, cease in a great measure to be discernible. It was there, for the amusement of the Allied Sovereigns and Chiefs, that, one day in the month of November, a large army assembled; and the various evolutions which mark the progress of a mighty battle were gallantly executed. I confess that my recollections of that brilliant affair are too little mixed up with enjoyment to cause my lingering over them. We marched from our quarters at one in the morning under a torrent of rain. We formed the line about eight, and continued till nearly dark charging, wheeling, changing ground, and careering about, till both men and horses were thoroughly spent; and we returned to our bil-

lets more jaded by many degrees than I, at least, had ever been before—not even excepting on the 18th of June, when the pride of Napoleon and of France fell beneath us.

From Arras we proceeded the morning after the review to Hazebrook, where our regiment lay in barracks throughout the remainder of the winter. Of these, however, we did not take possession, till some delay had occurred, of which, as I myself was, to a certain extent, the cause, it becomes me to speak somewhat more at length. The circumstances were these:—I was sent on with a party to take over the barracks from the Queen's Bays, and to make them ready for the reception of the regiment. I proceeded accordingly; but on arriving at the station, I found the rooms in such a state that I positively refused to take possession. They were not only filthy in the extreme, but the miasmata proceeding from them was horrible; and to add to the evil, I discovered in an apartment,

the door of which I was obliged to force, the corpse of a dead man. How he died, or why his comrades had thus abandoned him, we were never able to ascertain ; but the effect of my report, first upon the surgeon, and afterwards upon the commanding officer, was such, that the latter refused to introduce his men into a place of which the air seemed to be putrid. The consequence was, that for several weeks we occupied billets in the town ; nor were we removed into the station originally intended for us, till every room in the place, as well as the stables attached to them, had undergone a complete fumigation.

While we occupied this station, it was my fortune to witness one of those shocking exhibitions, from which every feeling of humanity urges us to shrink, but on which a curiosity, which is almost always resistless, compels us to attend ; I mean the public execution of several persons, whom the law had

condemned to die by the guillotine. There were in all four victims to offended justice: three of whom had been concerned in a burglary, attended by circumstances of gross cruelty; while the fourth stood convicted of the offence of arson, for which, in France as well as in England, death was in those days the penalty. The miserable men were conducted on foot from the prison to the scaffold, which stood in the great square or centre of the town; and being without shirts, and having their hair closely cropped behind, they looked, with their pale faces, ghastly enough. When they arrived at the appointed place, round which an enormous crowd was collected, three of them were halted, while the fourth, mounting by a ladder, was received at the top by two executioners. These men, a father and son, wearing dark red frocks, but not otherwise disguised, took their victim and bound him, belly downwards, upon a board, which they thrust for-

ward in such a way, that his head passed through a groove in a broad upright beam, and lay over a bag, which was suspended there to receive it. In the groove was the knife, which, on a signal being given by the elder of the two, fell, and ere we could so much as draw a breath, the head was severed from the body. It dropped at once into the bag, whereupon the executioners untying the trunk, cast it through a trap-door into a hole beneath; and then scattering sawdust over their horrid platform, made ready to deal in like manner with the next that should come. I shall never forget the sense of faintness which came over me, when I beheld the blood pour like water out of a pipe, from the palpitating trunk; yet, if any judgment might be formed from the ceaseless chattering of the people round us, none except my countrymen shared in the feeling. Moreover, it horrified me to observe, that here, as is said to be the case in

London, a large portion of the spectators were women. How extraordinary it is, that they, the most delicate of nature's handiwork, should thrust themselves into situations of such frightful interest. I declare, that their conduct throughout, altogether shocked me: they never ceased to chatter, no, not at the moment when the knife was falling; and so soon as one dead body had been committed to its temporary hiding-place, they appeared impatient till another should be stretched out before them.

In this place we spent the winter, miserably enough. The weather was cold, with much rain; the convent in which we were quartered was in a state of great dilapidation; fuel proved to be both scarce and bad; and provisions of all kinds were wretched. But these, though serious drawbacks to our comforts, did not constitute the worst evil of which we had to complain. A reduction in the army having taken place, volunteers

from the disbanded corps were permitted to enlist in the 11th Light Dragoons; and these, most of whom came from the corps of Artillery Drivers, proved to be, in point of character, of the worst description. The consequence was, that our regiment, which, up to the date of this unhappy occurrence, had maintained an excellent name, now fell off, both in morals and reputation, and a system of pilfering arose, such as compelled the commanding officer, however naturally averse to the proceeding, to tighten the cords of his discipline exceedingly. There were more punishments in the regiment, during four months after the volunteers joined us, than I had ever seen in all the years during which I had been a member of it; and I am reluctantly forced to admit that they were all richly merited.

Out of the very worst of these recruits two separate troops were formed; and to one of the two, which had its quarters at an in-

considerable village on the great chaussée of Lisle, I found myself attached. It was a source of extreme annoyance to me, for I knew none of the men; and, besides that, the quarter was a bad one, the whole country being flat, was laid under water, as if it had been a lake instead of a plain. Indeed, there was no passing from one farmhouse to another, (and it was among the farm-houses that we were distributed,) except by the aid of huge stepping-stones, each of which measured not less than from five to six feet in height, though its top barely surmounted the surface of the inundation. Now, though the natives, from long practice, found it easy enough to pass to and fro, the operation proved for awhile exceedingly hazardous to us; and to the last there needed great self-possession, and a state of brain perfectly clear, to carry us through. Fate so ordered it that I should be one of those to whom the difficulty of the passage should be rendered

experimentally manifest; and the circumstances under which my mishap befel were these :

I had learned that, in a farm-house some way removed from mine, a serjeant lay, with whom, as well as with his wife, I had long been acquainted. As may be imagined, the intelligence gave me great delight, and I resolved that no delay should occur ere I paid them a visit. Accordingly I proceeded one day to their quarters, and, being there informed that they had crossed the inundation to a village not far off, I followed them thither. The meeting was affectionate on all sides, and led to an adjournment into the back parlour of a linen-draper's house, the master of which dealt in contraband as well as in exciseable articles, and was famous for his well-flavoured and potent eau de vie. We chatted over old times, drank largely, and by-and-by became musical as well as talkative. The lady, in particular, favoured us with a

ditty, in the chorus of which we were expected to join; and, as the children of the family slept in cribs round the room, the effect, as our music grew momentarily louder and louder, was somewhat ludicrous. First, the little urchins opened their eyes, and lifted their heads with a curious look over their cradles. Next, they began to scream, as if to increase the melody of our canzonette; and, finally, they sprang out of bed with one accord, and ran, as if the spirit of evil had pursued them, calling aloud for their mother. For myself, I was in fits of laughter; for the mother came presently, to entreat that we would be quiet; and the whole of her little troop, accounting themselves safe only beside her apron-string, bore her company. Never was a more ludicrous scene presented. The landlady now coaxed, now remonstrated for silence: the serjeant's wife continued to pour forth her song, till it reached the twenty-sixth stanza; while the serjeant, on whom

the liquor had taken considerable effect, beat time with amazing energy on the table, and the children, whimpering all the while that the solo was in progress, broke out into perfect yells so soon as the chorus began. I must confess that I was never more amused in the whole course of my life; for there was terror mixed up with our landlady's indignation, which gave to it a very comical turn; and though I knew that her alarm was not groundless, I confess that I saw nothing in it that did not savour of the grotesque.

At last, however, my friend the serjeant's wife fairly broke down. She could not recollect the twenty-seventh stanza of her canzonette; and, as the night was wearing apace, and roll-call near at hand, we judged it expedient to depart. And now came the thought, how were we, in our existing state of brain, and in a dark and stormy night,—for the wind blew a hurricane,—to cross the swamp? I confess that, as far as I was my-

self concerned, I made up my mind to a ducking; but my friends took a different view of the case; so away we set in high glee, the lady jeeringly telling me to keep close to her, and she would guide me through all difficulties. The event proved, that in this, as in many other instances, there may be excess of hardihood as well as its opposite. We got, indeed, as far as the point where the water was well known to be deepest,—the serjeant in front, carrying a paper lantern in his hand, his wife following, and I bringing up the rear; but there we came to a stand-still: the lady's courage failed her; she stopped short—declared that she could go no further—and our situation became as pitiable as can well be imagined. At last we each gave her a hand, but neither entreaty nor objurgation could prevail upon her to take another step. “Stoop down,” cried I, “and make the attempt to scramble from stone to stone:” she tried to

do so; but the effort proved fatal, for her foot slipped, and down she fell, dragging both her supporters into the water. As a matter of course, we were all soused overhead, yet there our troubles ended. By sheer strength of arm I contrived to keep her mouth clear of the flood, while her husband, who was a tall man, dragged her forward: and thus, at the expense of a severe wetting from top to toe, we managed in the end to reach their quarters. A change of habiliments was here given to me: supper too was provided; and, by the help of a little more brandy, we managed to pass the night merrily enough. Nor was the slightest inconvenience experienced either then or afterwards by any of the party, in consequence of the rash attempt, and its ludicrous, though most uncomfortable issue.

It is not worth while to continue a detailed narration of the many little adventures that befel me during the remainder of

our sojourn in France. They were precisely such as those who understand what a soldier's life is will be able to conceive for themselves, while, to the mere civilian, I feel that it would be impossible to convey any accurate notion of them. For example, I was on one occasion quartered with a party of harum-scarum youths, at a farmhouse near Lisle, of which the owners appeared to have made up their minds to treat us with as little regard to our comfort as possible. They not only never offered to share with us any of the petty luxuries which they themselves enjoyed, but they made a point of refusing us the accommodation of their cooking utensils, and never failed to extinguish the fire in the kitchen, as soon as they themselves were done with it. For all this, my wild scapegraces took care to pay them off to their heart's content. In the first place, a hot loaf would disappear from the oven, no human being

could tell how ; then a lump of butter made its way in some mysterious manner from the larder, though the good woman had taken care to lock the door and put the key in her pocket. The honest man's clover, too, which he had stowed away with infinite care in the loft, made its way somehow or other into our horses' racks, and the animals grew fat and sleek in consequence, even while the allowance of forage served out to them by the legitimate authorities was admitted to be inadequate to their necessities. All this both astonished and chafed our hosts, who never could bring home a charge of pilfering against any one, and came at last to the conclusion that we were in league with the enemy of mankind. But the circumstance which brought these curmudgeons at last to their senses was this.

It is the custom in that part of France for the women to keep themselves warm by placing under their garments, while they sit

at their needlework, pots filled with the ashes of charcoal. Nobody would have noticed this, had our landlady afforded us the comfort of a fire in the grate; but this, as I have said, she regularly raked out after dinner, and if any of us complained of cold, she contented herself by remarking "that she could not sympathize with his distress." One day she had, as usual, sneered at our want of hardihood, when all at once an explosion took place beneath her, and she jumped up, unhurt, it is true, but the very image of rage and consternation. The fact is, that one of my lads had tied a small quantity of gunpowder very tightly in a worsted bag, and contrived dexterously to bury it in the hot ashes just as she drew her feu-pot towards her. Some time was, of course, required to burn through the flannel, during the progress of which my lady sat in her glory; but no sooner was the train fired, than all her courage forsook her. From that instant both

she and her husband were subdued: they expressed great regret to me at the line which they had previously taken; they promised, in case we would cease to molest them, that they would change their bearing towards us; and as we really did not desire at their hands more than we conceived to be reasonable, I engaged, on the part of my comrades, that all tricks and annoyances should cease. The farmer and his wife kept their word, and so did we, of which the result was, that during the remainder of our sojourn beneath their roof there was the best understanding between us.

Another little frolic in which we indulged greatly astonished the good people of Bailieul and its vicinity. The 5th of November overtaking us here, we resolved to burn a Guy Fawkes, after the manner of our boyish days at home. A man of straw was soon made, dressed up, and duly painted, which, with a bag of gunpowder in his interior, we

mounted upon a little cart, and dragged with much laughter through the place. At first the inhabitants seemed totally at a loss what to make of our proceedings; but, by-and-by, having stumbled upon an itinerant Flemish fiddler, and persuaded him, by dint of large potations, to mount the car beside our Guy, the sound of his music, and the ludicrous grimaces which he made, drew a crowd of delighted natives to follow in our train. It would be tedious to speak of the antics which were played off—all of them laughable at the moment, though unworthy of description,—till in the end an adequate number of fagots was collected, and the last scene alone remained to be enacted. Our intention was to burn our Guy in the little square or place of the town; but the mayor, apprehensive lest the thatched roofs might be ignited by sparks from the bonfire, entreated us to remove into a field of his own, a little way off. We complied with his request at

once; and a dark night having happily set in, we proceeded, by the light of half-a-dozen torches, to erect the gallows and to suspend Guy, with his fagots gathered round him. There was great shouting and merriment all this while; the fiddler played as if he had possessed the power of twenty fiddlers; men, and women, and children danced to his strains; and when the torches were applied, and the fagots began to blaze, the mirth of all classes among the lookers-on seemed only to increase. So it was till the flames reached the mine which the man of straw bore about with him in his stomach. But the effect of the explosion I shall never forget. Nothing of the sort had been anticipated by the French people; the catastrophe seemed to come upon them like some convulsion of nature; for they uttered a wild scream, took to their heels one and all, and never stopped to look about till they found themselves safe in their

respective domiciles. This was, of course, the very point of the joke to us; and as no human being suffered from it further than by the fright at the moment, it did not interrupt the excellent terms on which we had hitherto lived with our hosts.

Besides these frolics, peculiar to our calling and situation, we found entertainment, as well as instruction, in several grand reviews; camps being formed during the summer months, in which the troops of England and her allies were assembled. Moreover, we were yet in France when the Waterloo prize-money was issued to us;—and as it certainly went further there than it could have done at home, so were French shopkeepers and publicans principally the gainers by it.—We had also our fairs, our races, our fox-hunts, and other manly sports; some of which appeared to irritate, and all to astonish, the people among whom they were enacted:

yet let me do them justice,—except in a very few instances they exhibited no disposition to pick quarrels, or molest us, though a regard to truth compels me to acknowledge that we were not on all occasions over-careful to study either their prejudices or their customs.

At last, however, the period came when the army of occupation was to be broken up. We were stationed in and around Cambray when the order to this effect arrived. and we received our route to march upon Calais; which we reached, unless my memory be at fault, early in November of 1818, and not long afterwards embarked for England. A joyous day it was to all when once again we found ourselves, amid a crowd of our countrymen, forming in the streets of Ramsgate. We landed there on the 20th, were billeted for the night, and proceeded next day to Canterbury. But ours was

destined to be no more than a passing visit to the beloved land of our birth; and the reader, if he think fit to pursue my narrative further, will find whither it was that the fortune of war next carried us.

CHAPTER IX.

Voyage to India—Fort William—Sail up the Ganges.

BEFORE we quitted France a report had somehow got into circulation that the 11th Light Dragoons would be sent to India, and the 21st, which had served there some time, return home, and be reduced. We had not long occupied the barracks at Canterbury ere the truth of this rumour was confirmed. It was announced to us officially that early in the coming year the embarkation would take place; and leave to visit their friends was accordingly granted to such of the men as chose to apply for it. I was in the number of those who considered it expedient not

to refuse the indulgence. A furlough of fourteen days was in consequence conceded to me; and I spent the brief season very happily among my relatives in London; several of whom,—my mother being included in the list,—I was destined never to see again.

Late in the month of January, 1819, we marched from Canterbury to Chatham, where our horses were taken from us, and our saddlery and arms carefully packed for a long voyage. We lingered here about a week, at the termination of which the route arrived; and an easy journey of eight miles carried us to Gravesend. There lay two fine Indiamen, the “Atlas,” of 1200 tons, and the “Streatham,” of 800; on board of which we were appointed to take our passage: and soon after midday on the 7th of February we were all, with our baggage, embarked. I need not describe the scene of discomfort and confusion which greeted us.

Even when she is not the bearer of troops, an Indiaman, making her last preparations for the outward trip, is, of all sea-going craft, the least inviting; and when to her ordinary lumber is added the presence of several hundred soldiers and their effects, the confusion is increased fourfold. Nevertheless, in the present, as in other instances, the inconveniences to which we were subjected soon passed away; and a considerate captain, and abundance of good cheer, rendered us not merely contented but merry.

I am not going to entertain my readers with a transcript from the ship's log; nor yet to describe what has been described a thousand times already,—the order of a landsman's life while voyaging from Gravesend to Calcutta. We had the usual alternations of foul and fair weather, and we had—or believed that we had—more than one narrow escape from foundering; once by reason of some neglect in stopping the

hause-holes, through which the sea broke with resistless violence, and again, when in the tropics, we were taken aback in a heavy squall. At the crossing of the line Neptune and his train paid us their accustomed visit. Then was the ceremony of shaving gone through. Then were fire-engine, water-buckets, and slush-barrels brought into play. Then were men's tempers tried,—without in any case failing them,—and mirth and revelry kept the ship for a season in an uproar. Moreover, flocks of Mother Carey's pretty little chickens followed us round the Cape,—the huge albatross did not disdain to visit us,—and a bird called the booby, lighting on our yards, permitted himself to be knocked down with a stick or with the hand. Why should I speak of sharks, flying-fish, or dolphins,—why try to convey to such as have not looked upon the scene something like an idea of the tropical ocean, as well when it is calm and quiet in its

might, as when the hurricane sweeps over it? All these are matters on which I cannot think of touching, — partly because they have no novelty about them, — partly because to be rightly understood they must be made the objects of men's outward senses; not offered as material on which the imagination may employ itself.

Neither is it worth while to go into a minute detail of the little accidents which befel in the course of our voyage; or the sports and amusements by which we cheated it of its tedium. We had men fall overboard and get drowned. We had one case of suicide, — where the victim of her own headstrong temper was a woman. We had a death or two, followed by the committal of the bodies to the deep; and we were all much solemnized as we watched their downward progress. On the other hand, the ship being supplied with a very fair band,

it was our custom of an afternoon to get up a sort of universal ball to the sound of its playing. On these occasions the officers and other passengers, of whom several were ladies, used to dance on the quarter-deck; the ship's company did the same thing on the fore-castle, and the soldiers and their wives footed it away merrily in the waist. On the whole, therefore, we got on pleasantly enough. Nor let me forget to mention the degree of respect which was invariably paid to the Lord's Day. As often as Sunday came round all hands,—seamen as well as soldiers, arrayed themselves in their best. They then assembled, at a given hour, upon the quarter-deck,—the soldiers occupying one side, the women and children the other, the seamen standing towards the booms, and the cabin passengers close to the cuddy, that they might accompany the captain, who, with great solemnity and reverence, read the morning service of the

church. Neither did our sense of what was due to God's Sabbath end there. The day was a day of rest,—as much so, at least, as the nature of our situation would allow; for no more work was imposed upon the seamen than was absolutely necessary; and we were universally left to our own meditations.

In this manner a certain number of months ran their course, during the progress of which we not only never planted foot on shore, but never once cast anchor. It would be contrary to truth, therefore, were I not to acknowledge that we were getting heartily tired of our confinement on board of ship, when one day a voice from the mast-head gave the joyous announcement of land on the starboard bow. There was an immediate rush to that side of the vessel, and hundreds of eyes wearied themselves in the endeavour to realize the promise which the look-out man had given. But the coast of

Bengal, especially about the mouth of the Hoogly, is, as all the world knows, flat as well as barren; and though the breeze blew in our favour, and we steadily moved along, a good hour elapsed ere from the deck symptoms of what we sought could be discovered. At last, however, the glitter of a gilded pagoda in the sun attracted our attention. A loud and joyful shout rent the air; we heartily congratulated one another on the prospect of a speedy deliverance, and walked the deck for the remainder of the day in the highest state of excitement.

The anchor was dropped that night off the Pagodas, for the first time since our gallant crew had heaved it in Portsmouth harbour. By early dawn next morning we started again, and tiding along, found ourselves by-and-by abreast of the wild and tangled island of Saugor. How shall I describe the succession of wonders which from that time forth put in claims upon our atten-

tion? In the first place, every object on which the eye fell, the herbage, the buildings, the boats, and the people that manned them, had about them a character to which the mere power of novelty gave an indescribable interest. The first boat that boarded us contained four men, all black as ebony, and naked, except that a girdle was round their waists. These were regarded as persons of a very humble class, and we were right; but the next cargo that arrived bore themselves with so much dignity, that we felt as if we were in the presence of some native princes. They wore long loose robes of very white cotton, large turbans begilded and otherwise adorned, and moved about with a step so slow and measured, that it was impossible to divest oneself of a feeling of restraint, as often as one stood near them. My astonishment may therefore be conceived, when I saw one of the ship's officers seat himself on a gun-carriage for-

ward, and a native prince produce an enormous razor and set about the process of shaving him. Neither did the matter end there. The same grave and reverend personage, after completing this process with the third mate, offered, with a profound salam, to give me a specimen of his skill, to which, with a laugh, I submitted. I had never been so well or so pleasantly shaved before, and I stuck to my original barber for several years afterwards.

The Hoogly becomes at a short distance from its mouth so beset with shoals and sandbanks that the large Indiamen are compelled to cast anchor; the passengers and goods being transferred to vessels of more inconsiderable bulk, are in them conveyed as far as Fort William. It was on the third day from our arrival off the Pagodas, that we got into a couple of brigs, which, taking advantage of every turn of the tide, bore us slowly on our way. Nothing could be more

delicious than that voyage. The river becoming narrow as we receded from its mouth, introduced us to a succession of exquisite landscapes, every feature in which was to us as captivating as it was novel. Here embowered beneath the branches of the clustering banyan, over which would rise the stately stem of the cocoa-nut, might be seen some mosque or pagoda, or it might be the country-house of a native of rank; there a cluster of huts overshadowed by rich foliage, which was all strange to us, and therefore beautiful. Then again the country, though universally flat, was clothed in a livery of the freshest green; for we reached our destination in the very middle of the rains, and the verdure of the East, during the rainy season, is exquisite. But I must not continue these details; Indian scenery, like the scenery of other regions, must be seen, either in reality, or on the canvass, to be estimated aright. All the de-

scriptions in the world would not excite in the reader's mind one distinct idea, wherefore I cease to weary him and myself by any further efforts to accomplish an impossibility.

There is nothing so tempting nor so dangerous to the European on his first arrival in the country as the fruit which is pressed upon him by the native dealers. A long confinement on board of ship, during the larger portion of which no luxury of the sort has come before him, gives additional value to the odoriferous poison in his eyes; and unless he shall have been forewarned against it, and possess over and above a large share of self-control, he is sure to eat in more than moderation, and to suffer. I ate, and I suffered; for the day before we reached the landing-place I was in a violent fever.

If you are ever taken ill in India, you are not, in cases like this, kept long in suspense

as to the probable issue of your complaint. I was in bed with a raging fever one day, on the next I was sufficiently recovered to disembark with the baggage; and proceeded though not without a good deal of suffering, to take up my residence in Fort William. The fort itself is a magnificent structure, well defended with broad ditches, and covered by a succession of works, on which many heavy cannon are mounted. But the circumstance which attracts, in a principal degree, the stranger's admiration, is the exceeding care which is taken to keep it clean and well ventilated. Every day the sewers are washed out and sprinkled with quicklime; while, ere sunrise, the sweepers are at work, not only as often as occasion seems to require, but much more frequently. Moreover, the inmates of Fort William have other than human guardians of their health, so far, at least, as health is liable to be affected by the presence or removal of putre-

ying garbage. Every body has heard of the bird called the Adjutant, which walks about, respected, and therefore tame, and feeds upon carrion of every sort, from the body of the mouse up to the human frame, of which numerous specimens are, every tide, washed down the Ganges. A strange-looking creature he is—that Adjutant—with his bald head and his ashen-gray wings, and his portly form lifting his bald head nearly four feet above the surface of the earth. And then, when the heat of the day comes, away he goes into the skies, ascending so far that you can observe only the shadow of his form in the sun-beam.

The Adjutant is greatly respected by all classes of people, neither is he much of a plunderer; but this is more than can be said for a species of hawk which also frequents Fort William and its vicinity in great numbers. Nothing can escape the

quickness and the daring of that depredator. If a cook pass from the cookhouse to the barracks, he will dart down upon the basket which the man carries on his head, and take possession at one swoop of its contents. Indeed I have seen a hawk fairly fasten upon a bone which a soldier was picking, and wrest it out of his hand and from between his teeth. Neither is the fort free from the visits of troops of jackals, which make their way through posterns and lower embrasures after nightfall, and break the sleep, besides awakening the fears of strangers, who have not become accustomed to them. The jackal, however, at least as we find him here, is a very harmless and timid animal. He will run away with whatever morsels of animal food your own or your attendant's carelessness may have left in his way; but he never ventures to look man in the face, and flees from the barking of a watch-dog.

The buildings within the fort are very

commodious and handsome. Besides some noble barracks, capable of containing at least 3000 men, and casemates where a like number may be lodged, there are the houses or apartments of all the functionaries, such as the governor, surgeons, storekeepers, chaplain, and so forth ; with a church well-built and exceedingly commodious, an arsenal, and magazines out of number. I believe that the fort itself mounts, or is capable of mounting, 1000 pieces of cannon. It is likewise well stocked with smallarms, shot, shells, powder, and other munitions of war ; and is enriched, besides, with a very curious collection of native weapons, all of them taken during the progress of the struggles which raised the power of England in the East to the height which it now occupies. Then again the bazaar, portioned out into all manner of departments, and abounding in every article of which either native or European might be expected to stand in

need ; — the vegetable market, the fruit market, the stalls on which clothing was spread forth, the tables of the money-changers, and the money-changers themselves calling out, from amid their bags of gold, silver, copper, and shells, invitations for the visitors to deal with them ; all these sights and sounds, and many more which I have not now leisure to describe, even if I minutely recollected them, kept both the outward senses and the inward thoughts constantly employed, and sent me home, day after day, full of wonder.

Nor let me forget, while endeavouring to convey to others some idea of the sort of impressions which a first acquaintance with Calcutta produced upon myself, to make mention of the style in which we, private soldiers, lived, and the degree of deference that was paid to us by the natives. For example, having reached our quarters greatly fatigued, and seeing a number of cane-bottomed beds or sofas arranged round the

room, I slipped off my clothes with all speed, and throwing myself on one of them, soon fell asleep. I did not awake till about four in the morning, when there was a great bustle in the place. For a whole troop of natives entered, swept and washed out the room, spread some tables with nice clean cloths, and by-and-by brought in breakfast. Meanwhile, I went in search of my clothes; but, lo! they were gone. I inquired for them eagerly, and was yet in considerable alarm, when an Hindoo stooping down, began to unlace my boots; and before I could well conceive what it was that he meant to effect, they were both stripped from my feet. Well, thought I, if we are to pay for all this attendance, the king's allowance will not go far to keep us; but as I saw that others resigned themselves freely to what seemed to be their fate, I too gave way, and the natives held their course. The result was, that without any trouble to our-

selves, we found our clothing and accoutrements cleaned, a sumptuous breakfast spread forth, and nothing more required from us but that we should partake, at our ease, of the goods which the gods provided. Exactly as the clock struck eight a dozen cooks entered, followed by as many servants, all of them bearing on their heads baskets of savoury viands, and with stewed steaks, eggs, white loaves, butter, and coffee, before us, the fault would have been entirely our own, had we failed to fare sumptuously. So it was likewise at dinner time. We had no trouble—no anxiety; for the same attentive natives once more covered our tables with every thing which in that climate is either usual, or accounted a luxury. I must confess, that my astonishment knew, at the outset, no bounds. Yet, it is marvellous how soon we become accustomed to usages, which, when first seen, surprise—or, it may be, vex us. I had not continued long in

India ere not these marks of attention alone, but others of a more equivocal nature, were received by me as a mere matter of course. Certainly the Indian soil is that in which luxurious habits grow with a rapidity unknown elsewhere.

We had not been long at Fort William, ere Lord Moira, then governor-general, reviewed us; and we received orders to proceed to Cawnpore, whither we were to be transported in boats. I had never been in perfect health since we first entered the Hoogley; and now the sickness broke out on me with such violence, that I was removed by the Doctor's direction to the general hospital. For eight-and-twenty days I continued in such a state, that my life was despaired of;—and the origin of the whole was my own imprudence in indulging too freely in the fruit of the country. Thanks to an excellent constitution, however, and the careful nursing which I received, the

crisis of the fever passed, and I recovered; though not till my sufferings had taught me the lesson that the folly of an hour in matters affecting the body as well as the mind, not unfrequently lays up for him who is guilty of it, days, or months, or even years, of useless self-reproach.

I was still an invalid when the regiment embarked in the boats, which were to convey it by the channel of the Ganges to Cawnpore; and being unable to move, the doctor caused me to be carried in a palan-keen, and lodged with the sick, in the hospital barge. Of the commencement of the voyage, and of the circumstances attending it, I am therefore unable to speak, except upon the report of others. But long before we reached Dinapore, which is accounted, I believe, the half-way station, my health came back, and great was my enjoyment in consequence. I have certainly not much to say in commendation of our transports,

whether allusion be made to their sea-worthiness, or to the extent of accommodation which they afforded. Wretched affairs they were, being, like the country boats in general, almost on a level in their deck with the stream, and in every pore pervious to the water; no pitch being used in caulking, the loose cotton is soon pushed aside, and then through all the seams the water makes its way, giving ample occupation to one man in baling, and to another in the fruitless endeavour to stop up the yawning chasms with fresh material.

The current of the Ganges is, during the rainy season, very strong. Whole fields—I do not mean the produce—but the very soil of the flat country on either bank, are swept away by it; and if, as not unfrequently happens, the wind set in an opposite direction, the swell becomes tremendous, and the danger to the navigator is great. More than once it seemed to me that the

destruction of the frail bark in which we had taken our passage, was inevitable. Yet the Bengalees are in their own way skilful navigators, and by some means or another they contrived to carry us through all our difficulties. Once, I remember, even they considered themselves in a very delicate plight. We arrived at an enormous lake, or inundation. The wind blew a hurricane—the waters were white with foam, and the very means of making fast the boats were wanting. After a good deal of hesitation, our crew faced the danger, and their gallantry carried them through; but there were other barges there which would not venture to follow the example, and these suffered severely. Happily no lives were lost; and we all arrived the same night at Dinapore.

CHAPTER X.

Voyage up the Ganges continued—Scenes along its Course—Dinapore—The Stables—A Murder and Execution.

DINAPORE is a station for an infantry regiment; and were it not that lying low, it is, during the hot season, very unhealthy it would present many features of attraction even to the European. The country round is extremely rich and well wooded, while an excellent bazaar under the management of the quarter-master, as these military markets always are, supplies the troops with every article of consumption of which they can stand in need. The barracks, too, are commodious and well arranged, having a large

grass plat in the centre of the square, and ample stabling attached to them; and though the distance from Calcutta be not less than five hundred miles, the accommodation afforded by a water conveyance appears materially to abridge it. It was in Dinapore that, for the first time, I encountered elephants holding their way through the narrow streets of the regimental bazaar, yet injuring no one; and as the spectacle surprised me very much, so the expression of my wonder drew forth from others, familiar with the animal's habits, many tales of their extreme sagacity, of which the following is one.

A particular elephant, which was pointed out to me, had been in the habit, as often as it passed a confectioner's stand, to receive from the keeper of the stand, in the very heart of the bazaar, a parcel of sweetmeats. The owner of the beast becoming aware of the custom gave the elephant's keeper money,

and desired him not to restrict his charge in his recreation, but to pay for what the elephant got regularly once a week. The mohut, a dishonest man, kept the money to himself, in consequence of which the confectioner, who began to grow tired of feeding such a customer on credit, applied to him for payment; it was refused, and the confectioner, as a matter of course, protested that he would disburse no more sweetmeats. Well, it came to pass once upon a time, that the elephant arrived as usual in front of the stall; he held out his trunk, offered his accustomed salutation by grunting, yet received nothing. On the contrary, the baker loaded the mohut with abuse, and he and his gigantic charge by-and-by passed on; they proceeded to the tank, whither they were going to water, and the elephant drank as usual. They then returned—but the elephant would stop again in front of the stall, and the confectioner

again assailed him and his driver with the language of reproach. A summary punishment awaited him. The elephant, pointing his trunk with great accuracy, let fly among the pastry and sugar-plums before him such a shower of dirty water as soon reduced the whole to a state of absolute dissolution. As was to be expected, the confectioner complained to the owner of the beast, upon which all the facts of the case became known, and the poor *artiste* having been remunerated for all the losses which he had sustained, a fresh mohut was found to take care of his customer.

Nothing could exceed, on very many accounts, the degree of interest which attached to the remainder of our voyage after we quitted Dinapore. The farther we penetrated into the heart of the country the more were we struck with the peculiarity of the scenery and the strangeness, at least to us, of the customs of those who inhabited it.

Beautiful villages lay here and there along the river's bank, all of them clustering round their own pagodas; and each having its baths, its oratories, and terraces by which the inhabitants approached to cast upon the sacred stream their votive offerings. The consequence was, that as often as we looked towards the shore we beheld little groups of both sexes at their devotions, while the very bows of our vessel were garlanded with the innumerable bouquets which, tossed in at places higher up, came floating down the stream to meet us. I have counted scores of these rich garlands, throughout which the queenly lotus always shone conspicuous, bespangling the surface of the water at the same time. Nor could I repress a feeling, almost of involuntary reverence, for the sort of religion, wild and extravagant as it is, which led its votaries to do honour to the Deity by so simple yet so elegant a custom.

In making a voyage up the Ganges you

invariably bring-to at nightfall. The native boatmen have, indeed, no idea that it is possible to hold their course in the dark, and as their provisions, simple though they be, require cooking, it is at night that the process is invariably gone through. A very striking scene it consequently is after your cables are made fast, and under the trees, that grow to the water's edge, dozens of fires are lighted. Woe, however, to the European who approaches too near to these fires while the rice that is required for the evening meal may be undergoing the necessary preparation. If he disregard the shouts and signals of the natives, they throw both rice and their cooking utensils in the fire, and then, for the amount of remuneration, the transgressor is entirely at their mercy, for let the claim be what it may the officer is sure to allow it. But it was not the boatman's meal alone which was dressed at this hour. Our own native cooks

chose the same season, as indeed necessity required, wherein to make ready for our use the rations of each morrow; and once the circumstance of their doing so was productive of a little adventure which was long after spoken of among us with much interest.

The case was this. We brought up one evening, as usual, and made fast our boat to the roots of a large tree that grew close to the water's edge. We then landed, as our invariable custom was, and watched the cooks first light the fires, and then get the provisions in order for dressing. But instead of going on with that very necessary operation, they all, with one accord, fell upon their knees, and lifting up their hands, began, in a monotonous sort of howl, to pour out their prayers to the moon. At first we were astonished, then we became irritated; but by-and-by, on looking up, we saw that an eclipse had begun. It was in vain that some of us

urged these devotees to leave the moon to herself, and to dress our supper. So long as the shadow was on the moon's disc, they remained on their knees, praying earnestly; and when at length she shone forth again in her glory, they rose, clapped their hands, and shouted vehemently. It was a striking sight that of these naked, yet robust men, all offering up their adorations to one of the host of heaven: neither was the issue less remarkable. They dressed our meal readily enough, which we consumed, and then went on board to sleep. But they spent the whole of the night in singing and dancing, as the best mode of expressing their joy at the moon's deliverance from her enemy.

Among other strange sights which greeted us while prosecuting that upward voyage, I must not forget to notice the alligators which lay among the slime on the river's bank, like so many logs of trees, and rolled themselves into the water only when we ap-

proached them. I had never seen the monster before, and was in consequence a good deal alarmed by him, especially after I had listened to sundry tales of his great ferocity and exceeding strength, both by land and water. But the only practical effect produced by this commencement of our acquaintance, was to put a stop to the evening baths, in which we had heretofore indulged. One of the brutes was wounded by Captain Elliot, of the 11th, and after a fierce struggle, secured by a party of natives; and a closer acquaintance with his huge jaws and sharp teeth, had no tendency, it must be confessed, to reconcile us to their proportions.

Onwards and onwards we went, the river narrowing slightly as we drew nearer to its source, and a novelty of some kind or other greeting us at every stage. One day we passed a huge rock, which rises upright out of the centre of the stream, and which the

violence of the current has, in the course of ages, well nigh cut in twain. It is surmounted by a hut, in which dwells a Fakir, one of that class, half-mendicant, half-enthusiast, with which all parts of India abound, and whose habits are now familiar to every well-read person. How they levy contributions of rice and bread from door to door, I need not therefore tell, neither is it worth while to describe their voluntary penances—their years of torture as they stand motionless, never sitting or lying down to rest, and often holding one or both arms in the air; their horrid exhibitions on the swing, when a rusty hook is driven through the skin of the back, and themselves are whirled round, shouting and apparently triumphant, for half an hour at a time. These matters are set forth so much at length in all manner of publications, that even this hasty allusion to them might well have been spared. But it is one thing to read of exhibitions so

strange, and quite another to witness them; the subject may be stale to all the world besides, but it has still some interest for me.

While we were in the act of passing this rock, a numerous fleet of boats appeared in the offing, which as they approached, were seen to contain the relics of the 21st Dragoons. These men were on the passage to Calcutta, and a more miserable set of scarecrows it has never been my misfortune to behold. Climate and disease appeared to have made sad havoc with the whole of them. They were yellow and fleshless; and a hasty attempt to open with them some conversation in passing, showed that their tempers not less than their animal moisture, had been dried up by the suns of India. For example, having fixed my eye upon a gaunt and currie-coloured serjeant, I hailed him, and proceeded to ask whether Cawnpore was a nice place, and things cheap there. "You'll find out all that for yourself," was

his reply, as he turned upon me a ghastly look, "when Jack Morbus (meaning the cholera,) has brought down your buffalo hide to regulation pattern." There was something irresistibly comical in the expression of the speaker's countenance, as well as in the cankered and crabbed answer which he vouchsafed to a civil question. So we burst into a hearty laugh, and thus the two regiments passed one another.

In due time we reached Benares, the sacred city of the Hindoos, and were fortunate enough to arrive at a season when some great religious ceremony was going forward. The river was in consequence covered with votive garlands, and multitudes of both sexes were refreshing at once soul and body in the sacred stream. We did not bring-to, however, till we came opposite Ramghur—a place of some note in this part of India, and the residence of a Raja; and there, according to custom, so soon as the

boats were moored, I, with several more belonging to the detachment, landed.

There was something peculiarly delicious in these moonlight walks, as well because of the exquisite balminess of the air, as that they led us through fields of flowering cotton or luxuriant indigo, the bursting pods of which strew the pathways, and send forth a strong, yet not an overpowering, odour as you crush them under foot. On this night, however, our rambling propensities brought us into a situation of some danger, I verily believe, and certainly well calculated to alarm. I and my comrade were traversing a cotton plantation, when, looking to the right, we beheld a drove of black buffaloes feeding, by whom we were no sooner perceived than they tossed their heads into the air, and made a rush towards us. There was nothing for it but to take to our heels, so we ran as fast as our legs would carry us, till we reached a quickset hedge, through which,

at some cost both to skin and garments, we managed to squeeze. We were thus saved from the buffaloes; but on advancing towards the entrance of the village, our horror may be conceived when we found ourselves suddenly within twenty yards of what we mistook for a tiger. The beast was lying on a sort of bamboo cot, and seemed to be asleep, on which I pulled my comrade by the sleeve, and we quietly but rapidly retreated. Our consternation, however, was almost immediately changed into pure wonder: we saw some natives approach the beast, pat him on the head, and walk on; and being thus encouraged, we drew near in like manner, and saluted the object of our terror. It was not a tiger, but a chita, or hunting leopard; nevertheless, he did not seem to acknowledge our acquaintance so freely as he had done that of the Hindoos; for he opened his eyes with an expression so suspicious that we were heartily glad to

leave him to his own reflections. We accordingly pushed on to the Raja's palace, which we found to be a large brick building, surrounded by iron rails, and having gazed with wonder at the quantity of confectioners' shops that abutted upon it, we turned our faces back again towards the boats. A considerable detour carried us wide of the buffaloes, and we reached our sleeping berths in peace.

From Ramghur we proceeded to Allahabad—the Holy City, or City of God—beside which the Jumna pours its waters into the Ganges, both, at the point of junction, possessing a character of great sanctity. Here stands the tomb of the good and gallant Marquis Cornwallis; here, too, is an ancient fort, within the walls of which there used to be one of those sacred columns which the Hindoos adore, which was indeed standing when we reached the place, but has since been thrown down. It was here, after

having the boats dragged with infinite difficulty over a long succession of shallows, that for the first time we encountered a tornado in the power of its might, from the overwhelming violence of which our frail craft escaped only through the foresight of the crews in mooring them after they had been fairly run on shore. I shall never forget the terrible effect of that whirlwind, which, had it endured another hour, must have shaken the whole country into chaos. The loftiest and strongest trees either bent before it like reeds or snapped asunder, and were then tossed into the air; while the clouds of dust and sand which it swept along its course, blinded our vision, and seriously incommoded our respiration. Happily for us and for all that lay within its influence, it did not continue more than half an hour, though for more than twice that space we could follow its onward progress, as it swept away from us

in a straight line, carrying devastation and terror over a large extent of country.

We had a good many deaths during the passage, which lasted in all three months, and we buried our dead in deep graves which we dug along the river's edge. We might have saved ourselves the trouble. Our right wing, which preceded us a little way, had suffered in like manner, and they also deposited the remains of their comrades where the earth could cover them; but their graves, when we reached them, were all tenantless; the wolves and jackalls had dug the bodies up, and the scattered fragments of military clothing with which the sides of the different pits were covered, showed that the wild beasts had not left their lifeless owners to the tedious process of natural decay.

On the 28th of October, 1819, we arrived at the place of our destination, and disembarking at an early hour next morning, were

marched forthwith into barracks. We found them extremely commodious and comfortable; and as great care had been taken to put them in order for our reception, we counted, not without reason, on spending our time here with much satisfaction; for Cawnpore contains a large garrison, and is besides the residence of many persons of distinction, of gentlemen in the civil service of the Company, of merchants and others, and these have provided for themselves every accessory to enjoyment, not forgetting either a handsome assembly-room or a neat theatre. But it was not so much about these things as with reference to the horses which the 21st had left for our use, that my curiosity was excited. I accordingly embraced the first opportunity of visiting, along with a volunteer from that regiment, the stables; and, sure enough, the spectacle that met us there was strange enough. It was feeding-time when we entered, and the horses,—all

of them entire,—kept up such a screaming and pawing with their fore-feet upon the floor, that I could have fancied myself, not in a cavalry stable, but in a den of wild beasts. Neither, on inquiring into the characters of the individual chargers, was the impression produced by the first general survey effaced. One was a furious kicker,—another would tear to pieces any one on whom it could lay hold, and had actually bitten two men to death,—a third was accustomed to dance on his hind legs for ten minutes on a stretch, and to lash out with his fore feet as if he had been a trained boxer,—a fourth took fits of sullenness, and standing stock-still would strike with his heels right and left, so as to throw an entire squadron into confusion. In a word, a set of brutes more vicious was represented never to have come together, and it is but fair to add that on first mounting we so found them. But a few sharp field-days, with a

little stinting of corn, gradually tamed them. Several men received hurts, from bites, kicks, and falls,—many were run away with, till horse and rider became accustomed to each other,—but in the end we proved ourselves their masters. And then a very hardy, if not a very fleet, species of cattle we found them.

We reached Cawnpore at the most agreeable season of the year; and up to the month of March had little to complain of. To be sure the volunteers from the 21st, who joined our ranks, proved to be, as such persons usually are, troublesome, and in several instances not very worthy characters. Still we got along pretty well till the hot winds began to blow, and then restrictions to which it was judged expedient to subject us brought the true tempers of our seasoned comrades to the test. They murmured against the regulations of the regiment. They thwarted and interrupted the non-

commissioned officers in the discharge of their duty, and took at last to stoning them as often as they visited the barracks after dark. The colonel would not suffer this; so he called them all together, and assured them that the very first who should be detected in an act of insubordination would find cause to repent it. There needed no more to make these bad men desperate. They laid the blame chiefly on one Corporal Irwin,—and they swore among themselves that they would have their revenge.

Corporal Irwin might be a little sharp; but he was a just man in the execution of his duty: nor did he ever exact from others more than he was always ready to perform himself. For this he became a marked man; and one evening, after giving out the orders for the morrow, a scoundrel of the name of Hislop fired at him from behind a pillar, and desperately wounded him near the shoulder. The corporal fell, and the assas-

sin endeavoured to escape; but he was instantly seized. For we,—the old hands of the 11th,—were much attached both to our regiment, considered as a body, and to the officers and non-commissioned officers belonging to it; and finding the turn which affairs had taken among these strangers, we were determined that they should be taught that they would receive no countenance from us. The corporal being carried to the hospital there lost his arm. He did not, however, die,—at least, not immediately,—but his constitution received such a shock, that after undergoing the amputation there was not vigour enough in him to accomplish a rally. He lingered several months, and then expired. With respect again to Hislop, his fate was sealed. Being put into double irons, he was handed over to the care of the principal jailer in the place; and having been in due time tried

and found guilty of an attempt to murder, he was condemned to death. He was hanged, as he deserved to be, in the sight of the assembled garrison.

CHAPTER XI.

Fever and Cholera—Hospital Scenes—Change of Quarters—Preparations for War.

IT was now the season of the year when the maladies peculiar to this climate usually show themselves ; and, in spite of all the precautions that were used to hinder it, fever and cholera both broke out among us. Terrible was the havoc which they made in our ranks. At breakfast-time, or on the early parade, ten men might appear in perfect health,—within an hour half the number would be taken ill, and ere sunset the greater portion of them would die. The hospital became, as may be imagined, a

scene of complicated horrors. Providence was kind to me, so that as a patient I had no cause to visit it; but hearing one day that my cousin had been carried thither in a raging fever, I proceeded to nurse him. I never saw such a sight. With respect to my poor relative, he was already insensible, and in less than half an hour he expired. But elsewhere objects that both shocked and harrowed met my gaze on every side. There stood the doctor, — a kind and a skilful man, — with his sleeves tucked up and his arms crimsoned. Several assistants were near with basins in their hands to receive the blood which he took from the sick men's veins, while of the sick themselves, some were raving mad, others gloomy and desponding, others wholly insensible—the spark going out in these last, one after another. There could be little of order or regularity in disposing of the bodies of those who in such numbers, and so ra-

pidly, paid the last debt of nature. Every morning a couple of carts came to the hospital, and in these the corpses were removed to the public cemetery, where not a few, attended only by the comrades who loved them most, went to the sleep which knows no waking. Let me not, however, dwell upon events, the remembrance of which will hang by me through life, and ever in sorrow; indeed, I will quit this subject altogether after I shall have described a little adventure which befel me, not unconnected with it, though partaking more of the ludicrous than the pathetic.

When sickness broke out our men became divided into two classes, one of which the thought of the precariousness of their position sobered, while in the other it produced diametrically the opposite effect. These last, in order to drown care, drank hard and lived merrily; and, strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless true, that of them nine

out of ten escaped. To my shame be it spoken, the example of these reckless livers had more influence over me than that which the graver men set, and I drank, in consequence, harder during the prevalence of that epidemic than ever I did before or have ever done since; the result on one occasion was this.

There was a standing order from the surgeon, that whenever any of the men were observed to take to their beds, or lounge upon them at unbecoming seasons, the serjeant of the day should direct them to be removed at once to the hospital. It happened, once upon a time, that my comrade and I having gone together for the purpose, as I well remember, of purchasing a glass for my watch, we were asked by a native merchant whether or not we should like to be supplied with a bottle of superlatively good wine. Such a suggestion was not to be neglected, so we adjourned to his tent,

and there, together with a little bread and cheese, consumed between us three bottles of Cape, which the honest old man sold to us for genuine Madeira. The wine proved too much for us. To walk home with it was out of the question, so we ordered a covered bullock-car, drawn by two animals, and jogged along in this clumsy vehicle towards the barracks. Arrived there, nothing would content us but a dram of arrack; and the vile spirit coming immediately upon the scarcely less deleterious wine, placed us at once *hors de combat*. We staggered to our beds and were both fast asleep in a moment.

How long I had lain in a state of unconsciousness I cannot tell; but a vivid dream, in which I saw that the regiment had marched, leaving me behind, at length awoke me. It was pitch dark. I sat up in my bed, rubbed my eyes, tried to collect my thoughts, but could not. One of my arms, moreover,

being somewhat stiff, tended still more to confuse me. In a word, I was completely distracted. Accordingly I stretched my hand towards the wall, in order to ascertain whether boots, saddle, accoutrements, &c., continued to hang where it was my custom to arrange them. They were not there—and the conviction became strong that it was no idle dream of which I was the victim, but that I had indeed been abandoned by my comrades. Full of alarm, I sprang out of bed; and determined to make my way to the apartment in which troop A used to be stationed, I rushed towards what I conceived to be the bolted door of my own room, and pressed the whole weight of my body against it.

A door it doubtless was which in this strange way I had encountered, and as it did not happen to be so much as on the latch, the result to myself was a roll heels over head. Not having sustained any in-

jury, however, I immediately gathered myself up again, and in the very bitterness of grief shouted out, "Are you all gone?"

A feeble voice, the tones of which were not unfamiliar to me, replied by demanding, "Is that you, George?"

"To be sure it is," was my answer. "In the name of fortune where am I?"

"Don't you know?" was the reply.

"Know!" answered I, "how should I? Is the regiment gone, and are you and I left to die here together?"

"No, to be sure not, but you are in the hospital."

"In the what?"

"In the hospital—you and your comrade were brought in yesterday afternoon, both labouring under apoplectic fits; and if you had done what was right and becoming, you would have been a dead man by this time."

In an instant the whole truth flashed

across me, and the adventure appeared so ridiculous, that, hurrying back to my bed, I there indulged in a hearty fit of laughing. Neither was the disposition to be merry removed when daylight exhibited my comrade, lying on the opposite side of the room, and wondering, as I had done when I first awoke, where he was, or whether his identity had not changed. The result of the whole affair was, however, this. After learning that the serjeant on duty, a young and rash man, had ordered us to be carried into hospital, without so much as waking us to ascertain how we were, and that the surgeon took from each of us on the instant, thirty ounces of blood, the loss of which only caused us to sleep the more soundly, we were given to understand that we should again be visited in our turns by the medical staff, as well as by the colonel and adjutant of the regiment. Accordingly, at the fitting time, the whole of these gentlemen entered, and

our cases were stated to the commandant, not, as I imagined, without a very quizzical expression in the countenance of him who reported upon us. We, too, were sorely puzzled to keep our gravity ; but the mock examination ended in our being told to return to our quarters, and to take care how we put ourselves wantonly in the way of again being removed, as apoplectic subjects, into the hospital.

There died of the fever at this time not fewer than one hundred and twelve men, besides women and children, belonging to the 11th Dragoons. Our excellent surgeon also, Dr. Omally, fell a sacrifice to his indefatigable zeal and attention, and Captain Nowlan and the paymaster soon followed. Neither was the mortality confined to us ; of the 87th infantry, as well as the Company's artillery, many sunk under the disease, and the deaths among the native troops were to the full as numerous. At last, however,

the monsoons set in, and with them came a complete relief from the pressure of the disease; occasionally a man would die, but the violence of the distemper had passed away, and we were enabled in consequence to enjoy ourselves both within doors and without, as far at least as a ceaseless fall of heavy rain would allow; and in truth the violence with which the floods came down surpassed every thing of which I could have formed an idea. I have seen the barrack-square converted in less than an hour into a tank or pond, in which there was a depth of two feet of water, through which swarms of small fish were swimming, very much, as may be imagined, to our astonishment, and greatly to the delight of the natives. Neither were we long left in doubt as to the causes of the phenomenon. One day I was suddenly invited to watch with my comrades the progress of a water-spout, the formation of which was going on at no

great distance from the cantonments. I saw a column of water rise from a flooded meadow, and rush up, as it seemed, to meet a dense cloud that had gathered over it; the sun, too, happening to shine out at the moment, and to cast his rays obliquely upon the pillar, the effect was more beautiful than I have language to describe; and when in a few minutes afterwards the continuity of the pillar was broken, the spray from its lower portion fell over us as if it had been a shower of diamond sparks. It was not so with the heavily-laden cloud, which likewise in due time discharged its contents upon our heads. We read and hear of rain that resembles the pouring of water out of buckets: I never till that day was able to believe that there was any substantial truth in the simile. Nor was this all; with the rush of waters came down shoals of fish, some of them of a size sufficient to excite the cupidity of the

natives, who, attacking them with nets and buckets, conveyed them to their houses, and speedily converted them into material for a delicate supper.

As long as the monsoons last, the whole surface of the country is under water, and for a little while after the floods abate, the sterility is excessive. But in process of time vegetation begins, and the grass springs up, and the flowers blow with a rapidity which to the European strangers seems well nigh miraculous. Neither can the salubrity of the climate, while this state of things continues, be surpassed in any part of the world. I never experienced a more delicious temperature than that to which we were generally subject, from the end of October to the beginning of March. I never beheld a scene more delicately luxuriant and rich than the fields and meadows and woods presented during a considerable portion of that interval.

At last the season of relief came round; and the 8th light dragoons having arrived from Meerut, we received orders to pack up and march, for the purpose of occupying the station which they had abandoned. To such as have not witnessed in India the march of a regiment of cavalry, it would be no easy task to convey an idea of the extraordinary spectacle which is presented by it. Let my readers bear in mind, that troops never move in our Eastern possessions without carrying their market and their market people along with them. The bazaar, indeed, is not attached to the station, but to the corps: and the dealers being all regularly enrolled, must either go with the regiment whithersoever it may proceed, or cease to hold their licences as merchants. Hence, the night preceding the day on which the corps is to set out, all the tents in the bazaar are struck. Away then proceeds the motley crew, bullocks, cows,

camels, horses, and here and there elephants, transporting their goods; and as the site of each day's encampment is beforehand explained to them, they are generally ready to receive the troops when they arrive, and to provide them with the necessary refreshments. Meanwhile, at the first sound of the trumpet, the tents required to lodge the regiment on its march are packed upon the backs of camels and elephants. The former class of animals carries one tent, the latter two; and when the enormous size of the machine is taken into account, as well as the pegs, lines, and mallets required in pitching it, the strength of both beasts of burden—especially of the elephant—surpasses our power of computation. Moreover, as each baggage-animal has its company of attendants, each troop horse its native groom, and each man his servant, and each officer his half-dozen at least, I am sure that I do not place the numbers too high when I say, that

for one trooper there are at least fifteen followers in the camp. I cannot, indeed, compare the march of the eleventh to any thing more appropriate than the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt; for the column, though in point of numbers respectable enough, was absolutely obscured even on the line of march, by the swarms of men, women, children, and beasts of burden, that surrounded it.

The march which begins at an early hour in the morning, generally continues till about nine, when the tents are pitched, and other preparations made to pass both the day and night on the ground. It is astonishing to see the enormous extent of that encampment. Our single regiment, for example, covered much more than a square mile of country, for the horses are picketed at wide intervals from each other, and the tents of the several troops pitched so as to keep the horses of the one apart from those of the

other. Some way in rear again, stand the officers' tents, all set up in a row, like the street of a town; while further back still, is the bazaar—itself a town, and a very bustling town too, where every thing that is to be had in Calcutta may be purchased, though the corps be in the very heart of the jungle. Neither is the process by which we arrive at this state of order more akin to the operations of a mounted regiment in Europe, than the aspect of the Indian camp, resembles that of a camp in the western hemisphere. The word is no sooner given to halt, and dismount, than we hand over our charges to our native grooms. By them they are led to water, dressed, fed, and otherwise arranged, while we apply ourselves first to the business of breakfast, and then to the search after as many novelties, as the state of the bazaar may afford. But if we lead an easy life by day, it cannot be said that we enjoy much of quiet during the

night: then all the brutes, whether horses or camels seem to break loose. There is a continual floundering over the tent-cords—a continual shouting of people—a continual neighing of steeds, insomuch that he who has self-command enough to close an eye, or snatch an hour's sound sleep, need not distrust his own power of obtaining rest should he be thrown into any situation whatever.

I have neither the design nor the necessary qualifications to describe either the customs of the people, or the political condition of the country. Abler pens than mine have accomplished both tasks before me,—neither have I any ambition to bring my poor talents into competition with those of the men who wielded them. But the incidents which befel myself, and the little adventures that occurred to others, I am bound to relate, even at the risk of saying

over again what others have said, far more pleasantly.

On the seventh day from the evacuation of Cawnpore, we reached Feruckabad, which we found occupied by a considerable garrison, consisting entirely of the Company's troops. It is a pleasant place, having a market,ⁿ which is well supplied with vegetables, more especially with the potato, of which a short while previous to our visit, the natives had never seen a specimen; and being built upon one of the banks of the Ganges, it enjoys at the same time the means of easy and direct transit for its produce. We did not however linger here more than a few days. By easy stages we proceeded onwards; and on the 6th of December, arrived at the place of our destination.

Meerut, which lies beyond Cawnpore somewhere about two hundred and seventy-five miles, struck me as being by far the

most desirable station which we had as yet occupied since we landed at Fort William. Situated on the edge of an extensive plain, over which the winds from every quarter sweep freely, it is, beyond all question, more congenial to the constitutions of Europeans than any of the towns or cantonments that lie nearer the sea. Moreover, it forms the head-quarters of a large force, consisting of four troops of horse artillery, of one European, and one native cavalry regiment, of one regiment of European infantry, and two, if not three, of Sepoys. From among these, their wives and children, as well as because of the number of civilians that are also settled there, an extremely agreeable society is formed; and the habits of all classes being gregarious in the extreme, the intercourse kept up among them was of the closest. Then again on the plain we found ample space to manœuvre and to exercise; and for other matters, whatever a man's tastes might be in re-

ference to his out-door pursuits and athletic amusements, here ample opportunity was afforded of indulging them. We had cricket, long-ball, and rackets,—there was capital angling in the tanks, all of which swarmed with fine fish. There was shooting of every description,—not omitting to particularize that of the tiger itself,—and more than one magnificent carcase brought in testified to the skill and energy with which our officers pursued it. Indeed, I may sum up my commendations of the place by stating that I have no recollection that the time hung, throughout our sojourn there, heavy on our hands; and as to its influence upon our health, we soon began to wear again the same florid hues and filled-up frames that used to adorn us at home.

We had occupied these quarters some time,—having been visited in the interval by Sir Edward Paget,—when a rumour began to circulate that between the East India

Company and the Rajah of Bhurtpore ground of dispute had arisen. The rajah in question, Doorjan Saal, had, as is well known, set aside his nephew, and, ascending the throne, began ere long to exhibit a disposition the reverse of friendly towards the English. Inhabiting a place which had never yet opened its gates to an enemy, and which, though thrice assaulted in Lord Lake's day, had thrice repulsed the assailants, he regarded himself, and was by the people of Hindostan in general regarded, as the only king throughout that vast continent who might be expected to counterbalance or hold in check the power of the strangers. Hence, having quarrelled, no matter about what, with the English government, he could not be prevailed upon, either by threats or remonstrances, to make the smallest concession; and on our part preparations began by degrees to be made towards curing him of his

obstinacy, by depriving him at once of his fortress and his power.

It is no business of mine to remark on the steps which are taken by those high in power, and, as such, quite out of the sphere of a private soldier; but I only repeat what were the universal whispers in the army when I state that every necessary arrangement for carrying on the war with vigour was begun and completed by Sir Edward Paget. He was still in command of the troops in India when the necessity for war became apparent, and he it was who managed, in spite of the heavy drain occasioned by the operations that were in progress elsewhere, to draw an army together, and to supply it with such materiel as to render a failure under the walls of this famous citadel all but impossible. He did not, however, reap either the renown or the profit which attended the execution of plans which he had wisely laid.

Just before active operations began, his successor arrived from England, and, with a generosity which was considered at the moment well nigh to overpass its legitimate limits, he instantly resigned the command. Now there was no necessity for this. It was noble, indeed, and chivalrous, because it enabled another to gather the crop which his wisdom had sown, matured, and brought to the very season of harvest,—but I do not believe that the rules of the service required it; and I know that the issues were by all ranks among us greatly deplored. I have nothing to say against Lord Combermere. He was, and is, an excellent officer, and richly merits whatever good fortune may have attended him. But Sir Edward Paget's name stands at least as high, and the soldiers that served under him could not but lament that he threw into other hands the prize for which he had played, and which

he had won. However, this is a subject with which I have no concern; so I return, without further preamble, to my own narrative.

CHAPTER XII.

Meerut—Occupations there—Alarm of War with Bhurtpore—Multoa—The Baboons and Turtles—Meerut again—Second Advance—Bhurtpore invested.

THE cantonments of Meerut are separated from the lower ranges of the Himelaya mountains only by the plain of which I have already spoken, and on the edge of which they are planted. So close indeed are these inviting regions to the quarters of the force, that many civilians as well as officers of rank, purchase or erect for themselves country houses among the hills, and repair thither, as to a place of shelter, during the hottest of the months. More than once I accompa-

nied the colonel thither in the capacity of orderly, and not in any quarter of the world have I beheld scenery more varied or more truly magnificent. Even the lower ranges introduce you to defiles and passes of surpassing grandeur; beneath and beyond which lie valleys, fertile in the extreme, while in the background—up rise those giant ridges from which the snow is never withdrawn, and over which no human foot ever has passed, or in all probability ever will pass.

It was at the close of the monsoon, in the year 1825, that a small force, of which the 11th formed a part, assembled at Meerut, under General Ochterloney, and began its march towards the Jumna. Our immediate chief was an old and infirm man, as most of the Company's generals are. Nevertheless, we felt perfect confidence in ourselves, and our own regimental officers; so we pursued our journey, nothing doubting that it would terminate in results altogether satisfactory. A

few days carried us to the brink of the river, on the opposite side of which stands Multoa; a town of considerable size and great note, inasmuch as it is the residence of some of the most distinguished of the Mahomedan families which claim India as their native country. There we halted, while the infantry bridging the Jumna, by means of boats, passed over, and took up their quarters in the town. It was to no purpose, however, that the General opened a communication with the Rajah of Bhurtpore, the towers and bastions of whose lordly residence were from this point distinctly visible. Either because he credited the declarations of his priests, who assured him that his nest was unassailable, or that he was aware of the inconsiderable amount of the force by which at that moment he was threatened, the Rajah turned to every proposal a deaf ear; and we being by far too weak to enter upon more active operations, were forced to maintain for some

time an attitude of extreme watchfulness, while from other quarters troops were drawn together, and moved up to support us.

While we lay here an event befel of which I make mention, because of the deep interest which it created, not in the 11th Dragoons alone, but in every other corps attached to the expedition. There was in my troop a man named John Feathers, a native of London, and an extremely good soldier; between whom and myself, indeed, a close intimacy had long subsisted, and who was universally respected in the regiment. He was followed in the march by a little dog of the terrier breed, to which he became very much attached, and which seldom failed of showing itself at his heels, let him be where he might. One day, I think it was the second after our departure from Meerut, he and I had been drinking in the canteen, not so as to intoxicate, or even to inflame, but merely to refresh ourselves after the work of the morn-

ing, and the dog, as his custom was, lay down at his master's feet, where he either slept or seemed to sleep. By and by we rose to go out. We paid no heed to the dog, taking it for granted that he would observe our proceedings and follow, and had approached close to the tents of the regiment, when John discovered that he was not near us. He whistled, the animal came not; whereupon he went back, and I for company's sake went with him. We found the dog lying where we had left him; John called him, but he took no notice of the call, upon which his master being somewhat provoked, seized him by the neck and gave him a beating. The brute being frightened struggled, and at last bit his master slightly in the wrist; but the scar was so trifling, bringing scarcely any blood at all, that neither he nor I took much notice of it. As a measure of precaution I washed it for him

with arrack, and after getting it tied up he went to sleep.

The dog was certainly not rabid, for he attended John's footsteps ever after, and during the weeks that we lay in the Jumna, exhibited no signs of hydrophobia. The case was different with his master. He came to me on a certain evening, and complained that he felt excessive pain in the wrist where the dog had bit him. Being alarmed—I could scarce tell why—I advised him to consult the surgeon, but this he refused to do, and went to bed at his usual hour. Next morning the pain had ascended as high as the shoulder, and when he entered my tent, I saw that the expression of his face was terribly altered. He complained also of great thirst, and when milk was given him, though he managed to swallow a little, he rejected the rest with every symptom of disgust. There was no

disguising the sad truth from ourselves any longer. He was evidently suffering under a paroxysm of hydrophobia, and the surgeon being made acquainted with the circumstance, he was conveyed to the hospital tent. The utmost care was taken of him; but it availed nothing. He died that night at twelve o'clock, in a state of raving madness.

We were all grieved and sobered for a brief space by the fate of poor Feathers; but the grief of soldiers, like that of children, seldom lasts long; and in a day or two our attention was altogether devoted to the events and accidents of each day as it came round. As may be imagined, we did not fail to pay frequent visits to Multoa, which we found singularly clean and neat, especially in the region which lay nearest to the stream; for there each particular house had its flight of highly ornamented steps that led down to the water's edge, and

conducted the bathers to the place appropriated for their ablutions, whether they might be male or female, upgrown persons or young children. Neither was this the whole, nor the most striking feature which arrested our attention in this place. I never shall forget the first day on which, with five of my comrades, I crossed the bridge of boats, and entered the town. There was no crowd of carriages or palanquins in the street, neither were the pedestrians numerous; but a multitude of baboons constantly gathered round us, and made as if they would oppose our further progress. The fact is that the Indians of this part of the country are singularly superstitious, and hold many kinds of creatures sacred. On shore we have the baboon, in the river there is the turtle, of which countless throngs come as regularly to be fed from the hands of their devotees as if they were indeed gods, though dependent on their votaries

for nutriment. There was something wellnigh ludicrous in the menacing attitudes which the baboons of Multoa assumed, so soon as they ascertained, which they were not slow in doing, that we were foreigners. But they did not show much fight, for when, after a moment's hesitation, a cry was raised "six dragoons must not be stopped by a crowd of monkeys," and we dashed among them with our bamboos, and began to lay about us, they took to their heels in all directions. They retreated, however, still retaining an attitude of hostility. For no sooner had they gained the tops of the houses than they began to chatter and show their teeth, and even to pelt us with the bits of mortar and stone, which they managed to break off for the purpose.

The people looked very grave at us when they beheld the sort of bearing which we put on towards their much venerated baboons. If they had been aware of the sort of

treatment which we occasionally awarded to the turtles, they would have been a thousand times more indignant. The turtle, as I have just stated, is accounted sacred here ; and to refuse food to one of the genus who might apply for it by lifting his head above the water, would involve the delinquent in a degree of guilt far more heavy than is incurred by the utmost extent of cruelty to a human being. Nevertheless, I acknowledge to having more than once baited my hook for these very same gods, and not without prodigious efforts brought more than one of them to the shore. The brutes weighed from seventy to one hundred pounds. They differed from the sea turtle chiefly in their extreme whiteness and in the delicacy of their flesh, but they were not to be despised as an article of food, and when dressed, with abundance of cayenne pepper and other spices, the epicures among us accounted them great delicacies.

At the further extremity of Multoa stood

a ruined temple, by ascending one of the towers in which, at least two hundred feet high, we succeeded in obtaining an extensive and striking view over the whole face of the surrounding country. From this point I could distinctly perceive Bhurtpore and its gigantic fortifications, as well as the very inconsiderable camp, within the limits of which the whole of the force as yet brought up to reduce Bhurtpore was assembled ; and it was impossible not to feel, while looking upon the relative strength of the hostile parties, that if this were all which England could bring against the Rajah, her game was desperate. The lapse of a little time, however, sufficed to show that these surmises and speculations were wholly groundless ; but as it is not yet time to enter upon the serious business of the siege, I may as well disburden myself at once of the petty anecdotes and narratives which stand between me and that which constitutes after

all, the main incident in my Indian adventures.

While we lay in the vicinity of Multoa a camp follower died who belonged to that caste or class of the native population, which always burn their dead. His body of course was set apart that it might be consumed; and being curious to behold a spectacle of the kind, I took care to attend. In the sloping bank of the Jumna the friends of the deceased dug out a convenient resting place for the pile. It was a sort of terrace, which measured perhaps six feet in length by four in breadth, and there, upon a couch, composed of a double row of very dry billets, the body of the wretched camp-follower was stretched. They covered him thickly with a coat of gie, that is of melted butter made of the milk of the buffalo, upon which they piled a quantity of dry grass with fagots, and light wood over all. As soon as the preparations were com-

pleted, several of the near relatives of the deceased approached to ascertain that all was in order, and immediately on their retiring the torches were applied, and the flame sprang upwards with amazing rapidity; I never looked upon a more disgusting sight. The pile burned furiously, so much so indeed, that several persons with long poles, were obliged from time to time to keep the half-consumed flesh from rolling out of the flames; and what was more horrible still, the hawks, of which I have elsewhere spoken, as infesting this hemisphere, succeeded more than once in setting both flames and poles at defiance. I saw several of these birds pounce down, seize a morsel of flesh while it was broiling and fly away with it. At last I grew perfectly sick; and returning to my tent, thanked God that I had been born in a land where such horrors were unknown.

We lingered on in this situation for a good

many months, during the hottest of which, including March and April, we managed to render the tents habitable only by fitting to the doors on the weather side a sort of screen of grass, which was kept perpetually moist with water. By-and-by, however, the division broke up, and returned for the monsoon to Meerut, where poor old General Ochterlony died—respected, yet scarcely regretted, by the troops that served under him. We returned, moreover, just in time to witness the consecration by the bishop of a handsome church, dedicated to St. John, which had been built by private subscription. Let me not omit to give the credit which is his due, to the pious and excellent pastor of that church, the Rev. K. Fisher. If ever man lived to discharge the duties of his station, Mr. Fisher was that man; and the consequence was that he won over many a profligate to repentance, besides securing the affections of the whole garrison, and making

numerous converts from Heathenism to Christianity. I shall never, as long as I live, forget the tenor of the admonitions which I received from him, and some, I doubt not, out of the multitudes who then held the same language with myself, still survive to repeat it.

While we occupied our old cantonments at Meerut, a fire broke out in the stables, which was supposed, I cannot tell how truly, to have been occasioned by the wilful negligence of some of the natives. It cost us several valuable horses, besides many more so injured, that not till the expiration of many weeks were they fit to be ridden. And not the least provoking part of the business was, that the perpetrators of the crime played their cards so skilfully, that beyond a suspicion, nothing was ever brought home to them.

Thus passed several months, at the termination of which, the order reached us to ad-

vance once more into the immediate vicinity of the hostile city. We set out, as our custom was, at an early hour in the morning;—yet even then, on passing the gate of Mr. Fisher's country-house, we saw the good man waiting to greet us; and fervent were the prayers which he put up for our wellbeing, whether we should ever behold him again or not. I assure my reader, that I am neither a hypocrite in matters of faith, nor a sickly sentimentalist; but I declare to him in all soberness and honesty, that I never was more deeply affected myself—nor saw a regiment of soldiers more deeply affected, than we all were by the prayers and the blessings of one whom we so sincerely loved and respected. Neither let me fail to observe, that not in my poor judgment only, but in that of all the most intelligent of the members of the British army—is there any thing which so much stands in need of reformation, as what I may

venture to call the Chaplain's department in the service. Our superiors may think as they please,—but we, who fill up the ranks of the British army, know that we have souls to be saved, and very grateful should we be were there always at hand those who could tell us how to proceed, in order to ensure their salvation; and I can attest—in proof of this—that there was not a man in the 11th Dragoons, nor indeed in the European garrison of Meerut, who would not have laid down his life for the Rev. Mr. Fisher, more cheerfully than for any officer under whom he immediately served.

Onwards we moved, not easily forgetting our kind friend, or his generous benedictions, till by-and-by we took up our old ground, on this side the Jumna, and opposite to the city of Multoa. I cannot tell why we should have expected to remain there, but we did not remain, for the very next morning we crossed the river; and

pushing on to a range of heights, which in some sort, command the plain on which Bhurtpore is built, we there pitched our camp, waiting till the army should assemble, and the siege, of which nobody any longer doubted, should begin in real earnest.

From day to day, after our establishment in this camp, troops, stores, and cannon came up. The heavy guns which had been collected at Agra, were transported to the place of assembly by water, and the new commander-in-chief, Lord Combermere, making his appearance about the same time, the whole army was reviewed, and next day put in motion. It was the duty of the 11th, supported by some native cavalry to cover the advance, and many a formidable piece of ground we passed over. Not an enemy however showed himself, and about noon on the third day, the towers and bastions of Bhurtpore uprose in the centre of a huge plain, immediately be-

fore us. Nothing could exceed the carelessness, or the misplaced confidence of its ruler and his troops. Though they must have been long aware of our hostile designs, they took no precautions whatever to defeat or even to retard their accomplishment; indeed, we found that the very trenches which Lord Lake's people had dug were not filled in. Lord Combermere, as may well be imagined, made haste to prevent their remedying an error so gross and so palpable. The trenches were immediately occupied by the king's 34th regiment of foot, and much time, as well as a large amount of fatigue saved to the besieging army in consequence.

The town and fort of Bhurtpore are planted in the very heart of an enormous wood, of which the outskirts approach within five or six hundred yards of the defences of the place. The wood is intersected in all directions by roads or passes; and

while the infantry worked in the trenches and pushed their saps, we, that is the cavalry, had it in charge, to guard these passes so as to prevent both ingress and egress to the garrison. We were not always permitted to effect this, or to do the ordinary duty of outline picket, without molestation, as well from the enemy's guns, as from attacks by their very active and vigilant cavalry. The former of these modes of annoyance cost us several lives, among which I must mention that of Colonel Faithful, chief engineer to the army. The latter did not often pass off without wounds both to men and horses on either side. One day in particular I well recollect that the arm of Mr. Gruer, who commanded our picket, was severely hurt by a thrust from a lance; while the charger of one of his men had his tail cut off close to the stump, as clean as if the operation had been performed by a surgeon.

The wood which surrounded Bhurtpore was so dense, that in spite of constant service at the outposts, a good while elapsed ere I succeeded in obtaining of the place such a view as could be said to allay my very natural curiosity. It was only, indeed, by riding to the far extremity of one of the avenues, that you could hope to see a yard beyond your own ground; and this, for some reason which was never explained to us, we were particularly cautioned from hazarding. But there is no repressing the laudable disposition which urges men in general to increase their knowledge. My comrade and I being on patrol one morning, determined to indulge the desire under which we had both for some time laboured; and finding all clear to the extent which we had been directed to reconnoitre, we pushed gallantly beyond it. Suddenly we found ourselves on the edge of the open country; and the formidable appearance of the place against which

our operations were directed I shall not soon forget. There seemed to be no limits to the succession of redoubts and batteries which covered it on every side. Abbattis, too, had been felled and laid with consummate care, so as to obstruct the approaches, and expose columns in advance to the fire both of cannon and musketry; while, that a sharp look-out was kept by the garrison, and the parties detached from it, we had soon the best reason for knowing. Though there were but two of us, we scarce showed ourselves on the open plain, ere four or five guns were directed against us; and the precision with which the artillerists threw their shot, soon warned us to withdraw. We did so, well pleased to have seen so much; neither did we return empty-handed. The wood was full of animals of the chase—of deer, buffaloes, hares, antelopes, and even of wild boars—to the pursuit of which, when not engaged on duty, we

were accustomed to devote many an hour; and this day my comrade having killed a wild hog by a pistol-shot, we gathered him up, and carried him triumphantly into camp.

It was, not, however, exclusively by reason of the stock of game which abounded there, that the woods around Bhurtpore proved fruitful to us of interesting occurrences. Numbers of Bhurtporeans—by what motive instigated I cannot tell—used to penetrate these thickets; and to pursue and make prisoners of these afforded us almost as much sport, as to chase the antelope, or run down the wild hog. Yet we never succeeded in extracting from them any valuable information. They would even deny that they belonged to the fort, or had any connexion with its inmates; nor could either promises or threatenings prevail upon them to alter their tone.

Meanwhile the besieging force set to work in good earnest, and pushing forward their approaches, threw up batteries, from which, in due time, a heavy fire was opened. Of the solidity of the walls, however, against which this cannonade was directed, it would be difficult for those who never looked upon them to form a conception. Though faced with common masonry, they were constructed within the shell out of huge trunks and limbs of trees, which, being arranged longitudinally, and having the intervals between them filled up with solid and well rammed clay, offered to the shot such resistance, as could have come from no other kind of fortification whatever. I have seen scores of balls strike and splinter the stone work close to the line of breach, without causing the slightest inclination of the rampart itself; indeed several days elapsed ere the feeblest com-

mencement was made in the work, which breaching batteries are expected to accomplish in half that interval. Neither were our gunners permitted to have all the amusement to themselves. The enemy kept up a heavy fire from a large number of cannon—not without some loss, and more annoyance to the besiegers; indeed the crashing among the branches, as often as the Bhurtporeans warmed to their work, was awful; and not a few of our people received wounds from the splinters which were thus scattered about.

In the labours of the siege we mounted men, took no part. Our duties consisted in guarding against sorties, and hindering supplies from being thrown into the place; and in the execution of these services we came, as I have elsewhere related, more than once into collision with the enemy. But as I cannot recall to my remembrance any

affair of which the details put in especial claim upon the reader's attention, I will not weary him by forced descriptions where there is, in truth little or nothing to describe.

CHAPTER XIII.

Siege and Capture of Bhurtpore.

So passed several weeks, the roar of artillery sounding continually in our ears, and casualties occurring from time to time, as if to remind us, that we were enacting not the semblance but the reality of war. Among these sounds there was one which became by degrees so familiar that we expected it as regularly as midnight came round ; and, having heard it, became forthwith satisfied, that hostilities would not be renewed at least for an hour or two. There was an enormous gun on one of the bastions of the city, which the

garrison were accustomed to discharge only at stated seasons—or if some particular effect was desired to be produced. The report emitted by that discharge drowned every other noise for the moment, and if they never succeeded in doing any execution in the camp, the fault lay, not with the loading but with the pointing of the gun. From us it got the name of Sweet-lips, and the common remark used to be, “Oh, now Sweet-lips has spoken, we may go sleep.” The gun of which I speak now ornaments the parade in St. James’s Park. It is an extremely beautiful piece of mechanism, but considered as a weapon of war, was perfectly useless.

Time ran his course, and the publication of an order one day, in which volunteers from the cavalry were invited to share with their dismounted comrades the honour of the assault, informed us for the first time that a breach had been effected, and that it either

was, or was expected soon to be, practicable. As there is never any backwardness among British troops to occupy the post of danger, when it is pointed out to them, so the publication of the order just alluded to was hailed with loud acclamations. Every man upon parade, indeed, hastened to give in his name, nor was it without occasioning much mortification to those whom he determined to keep with their standards, that the colonel finally made choice of ten men per troop for performing this novel service. But the joy of the favoured few, and the envy of the rejected many, proved in the end to have been equally misplaced. After we had paraded several times on foot by ourselves, and were now looking for the route from hour to hour, the arrival of a fresh European regiment in camp caused us to return to our horses. With three British regiments the general conceived that he was strong enough to storm a town, of which the garrison was

understood not to fall short of fifteen thousand men ; and with three British regiments, supported by a considerable body of sepoy, the assault was finally delivered.

I can give no account from my own personal observation of any thing that went on in the trenches, either during the process of digging and laying the mine by which it was proposed to enlarge the main breach, or just before the mine was sprung. It was reported in the camp, indeed, that a serious accident occurred : that the troops being formed for the assault edged too near to the loaded chamber of the mine, and that the explosion, though it tore the enemy's defences to pieces, was scarcely less fatal to us, by blowing up the leading company of the 14th regiment, and killing a good many men in the company that followed. These things may or may not have happened. All that I know on the subject is, that having been moved up on the day

of the assault to the edge of the wood, we sat on horseback from an early hour in the morning, watching with breathless anxiety for the report which we were given to understand would at once open out the way for the advance of our comrades, and act as the signal for the rush.

It is marvellous with what a slow and heavy step the moments pass by when men are thus circumstanced. I thought that the clocks would never strike nine, and yet the hands were moving that day as they usually do, neither faster nor slower. We spoke to one another, too, in whispers, as if there had been risk of creating an alarm, which there was not; and vainly and eagerly we strove to catch so much as a glimpse of the scene of action, through the thick branches that interposed between us and the town. At last one of our officers, who had repeatedly consulted his watch, said aloud, as if speaking to himself, "We'll have it soon, for it is close upon the hour."

He had scarcely uttered the words, when a far-off cheer was heard. A boom of cannon and a rattle of musketry, and then, and not till then, we heard the roar of an ignited mine, and we knew that the struggle was begun in earnest. I never looked upon an object with deeper and more breathless interest than upon the wreath of smoke, which like a vapour rose above the branches. It was the canopy beneath which brave men fought and died ; it was the shroud in which not a few of them had been enwrapped ere to our eyes it became visible.

If I except the untimely explosion of the mine, of which, however, I can speak only on the authority of vague rumour, no arrangements could have been more judiciously entered into, or more skilfully carried out, than those which led the way to the storming of Bhurtpore, and aided in its capture. While the troops were moved over night into the trenches, and stood ready to spring forward

at the appointed signal, all the drummers and musicians remained in camp ; where, beating the *reveillie*, and executing the signals that were usual on days of perfect quiet, they did their best to prevent a suspicion from entering into the minds of the garrison, that the crisis of their fate was come. How far the device succeeded I cannot pretend to say. The heavy firing which followed the explosion of the mine showed, that never for an instant had the breaches been left unguarded; and the tenacity with which the defenders held them good, was vouched for by its long continuance.

We were deeply interested in a scene, of which we would have given worlds to become spectators, when the adjutant, who was employed to look out, suddenly reported that the British ensign waved upon the top of the ramparts. In a moment all was excitation and bustle. A loud long cheer, so soon as we felt ourselves firmly in the saddle, caused the

glades and deeper recesses of the forest to ring, and away we went at full gallop, in order to intercept a body of horsemen, whom the adjutant had observed to emerge from one of the more distant gates of the fortress, almost as soon as the British standard began to wave from the summit of the breach. Not unobserved, however, by the garrison, albeit, sharply engaged with our infantry on their own ground, was this our forward movement. They turned upon us instantly some six or eight guns, the balls from which passed over, or in front, or on either side of us; yet, with two exceptions, all proved harmless, and we held our onward course unchecked. One man was cut in two close by my side. The other shot struck a horse, and sorely wounded his hinder-quarters; but these were the only instances in which the enemy's fire told, though it was both well-directed, and warmly sustained.

Being now within two or three hundred

yards of the fort, our riflemen, of whom I was one, were sent out to skirmish. Away we dashed, ten of us keeping well together; and disregarding the shower of balls that fell round us, we succeeded in gaining the edge of a large pond or tank, the high banks of which, together with those of some salt-pans adjoining to it, rendered us tolerably safe from the artillery practice of the enemy. Here we extended our files, which we had scarcely done, ere I found myself opposite to some twenty or thirty horsemen, whom, judging from their long robes and magnificent turbans, I put down in my own mind as nothing less than the Rajah himself, and some of his immediate attendants, endeavouring to effect their escape. I tried to pull up and get a shot at them; but ere I could do so, one of their body took deliberate aim at me, and his ball struck the ground just under the nose of my charger. I returned his fire, and saw him bend over his saddle-bow, at

the instant that a ball from somebody else splashed into my cloak and lodged there. But the party, of whatever class of men it might consist, did not linger long where they first confronted us. The 59th having by this time won the ramparts in their rear, opened upon them a heavy fire of musketry. Whereupon they gave the spur to their steeds, and without so much as pausing to observe what might be in front, they galloped off towards the point, where egress into the open country was most immediate.

The salt-pan lying between us and the fugitives, we could not dash in upon them; but away we flew, as fast as our horses would carry us, rounding that obstruction, and striving if possible to head them. At last we arrived, one by one, at a road which led directly to one of the gates of the city; and the scene of confusion which there opened on me I shall never forget. Forth from the gateway and over the drawbridge

rushed multitudes of fugitives, whom our victorious infantry closely pursued; and the slaughter which was effected by the bayonet, by musketry, and by the crushing of man upon man, I have no language sufficiently frightful to describe. Neither were we without our incidents; the excitement attending which at the moment was very great. For example, the first objects that arrested my attention on rounding a corner of the road, were Serjeant Waldron, of our regiment, and a ferocious-looking Rajpoot, savagely confronting one another. The Serjeant having discharged his pistol, had his horse drawn up to a position wellnigh rampant, while the Rajpoot, who stood within six yards of him, was taking deliberate aim at him with his carabine. I saw that there was not a moment to be lost. I thrust both spurs into my horse's flanks, and, while in the act of advancing, I took aim, fired, and brought the Rajpoot dead to the ground.

Serjeant Waldron sprang forward to meet me, gave me his hand, and thanked me for his life; after which we drew our swords, and dashed into the midst of the fugitives. Numbers were cut down, some with arms, others without, till by-and-by the survivors lost all heart, and intreated us to spare them. We had no mind to kill men who offered no resistance; so, desiring them to throw down their arms one by one as they approached, we saw them gallop or scamper off, and never once troubled our heads to inquire whither they were going. Yet there was one little group in that miscellaneous crowd which I must claim credit for having saved from insult, and guarded to a place of safety. I saw two fine-looking women, whom a band, apparently of servants, followed, make one or two efforts to pass, yet continually shrink back again. Upon this I rode forward, and making myself understood by signs, rather than by words I vo-

lunteered to be their protector; they gratefully gave themselves up to my guidance, and I had the satisfaction to carry them uninjured through the throng, and to see them ride off in a direction where all was clear, after I had received from them the most gratifying acknowledgments.

Having seen them safe, I returned to my former station, time enough to witness the barbarity with which a corps of Sepoys cut down the fugitives by whole sections. Not having any particular delight in scenes like these, I rode aside, and going up to my Rajpoot, who lay where my ball had dropped him, I observed, to my surprise, that his carabine was of English manufacture, and that it bore, besides the common Tower mark, the number 1800. Meanwhile, however, my comrades had moved off in a different direction, so conceiving that I was bound to follow, I gave my horse the rein, and tried to trace them. In this

effort I crossed several fields, in the far corner of one of which I came upon a single Rajpoot, who seemed to have posted himself there over a heap of loose armour, and who, on my calling to him to surrender, instantly placed himself in an attitude of defence. I rode at him, delivered a heavy blow on the top of his head, felt that the sword had made no impression, yet saw him fall. The fact is, that the weight of my blow stunned him, even while the solidity of his turban hindered the edge from penetrating. I did not stop to repeat the blow, which was clearly not mortal, inasmuch as he turned himself round as I passed, and spat at me; but I was too anxious to rejoin my regiment to think of avenging the insult, and therefore left him with a whole skin in the mud.

In prosecuting my search after my missing comrades I passed several spots of ground, which cumbered with dead men and horses,

as well Europeans as native, besides broken arms, torn garments, caps, turbans, and so forth, exhibited manifold signs of a battle stoutly maintained. By and by I plunged into the wood; and there too, as I afterwards learned, a warm skirmish had occurred, many of the Bhurt poreans climbing up into the trees, and shooting our men from their perches. Of these almost all were put to death; yet in the heat of that wild affray a little incident occurred, of which, because of the merit due to Major Smith, the chief actor in the scene, and because of the evidence which it affords of the absence from modern warfare of all feelings that brutalize and degrade, I am bound to make mention. A poor native child, of singularly interesting appearance, had fled with his father from the fort. The party to which the father belonged, fell in with our people in the wood, and a warm struggle ensued. In the course of this skirmish the unfortunate man was killed; where-

upon the child, throwing himself down beside the dead body of his father, wept bitterly in apparent regardlessness of the thousand deaths by which he was surrounded. Major Smith, of the 11th, being greatly touched at the scene, rode forward, and causing his native servant to interpret for him, promised to be a protector to the child. He faithfully redeemed the pledge. The child was removed from the field of slaughter to the major's tent, and was finally, at the major's expense, established in life.

The town was now our own, and the pursuit of the fugitives having been carried far enough, the trumpets and bugles sounded the recall, and we formed up in obedience to it. I shall never forget the shocking spectacles that greeted me, as I rode towards the ill-fated city, and still more after I had passed beneath the gateway. In every direction, along the road, beneath the arched gateway, strewed over the old city, under the

ramparts and above them, the dead lay in hundreds; the mangled bodies of women, ay and of children too, being intermingled with the carcasses of slaughtered warriors. Of the wounded, moreover, not a few exhibited towards us the most malignant feelings. One man had been cut down as he was in the act of scattering over a narrow causeway, handfuls of crowsfeet—a vile implement, which has three long sharp spikes, one of which always turns uppermost, inflicting painful and desperate wounds, both on men and horses. He was not dead when I passed him, and though his arm had lost its power to throw his horrid implement to any distance, he nevertheless strove to shove one under me, and spat at me in impotent fury. Others I beheld, whose garments had taken fire from the explosion of their own pouches. These not only rejected our assistance, but covered us with execrations when we advanced to proffer it. In a word, the spirit with which the

garrison was embued, seemed to have been one of the wildest fanaticism; which needed but the guidance of some mind of higher order than that of the rajah, to render it irresistible.

The booty taken in Bhurtpore was, I have reason to believe, immense: a large portion of which went, I suspect, in indiscriminate pillage among the assailants and the followers; yet enough was secured to give to the commander-in-chief a very handsome donative, and to each private soldier, native as well as European, between 40 and 50 rupees. In the citadel, which held out one day after the town, little was found of value. Three deserters were, however, recovered; one of whom was tried, and the next day shot; while the remaining two were condemned to transportation for life, and an existence whether long or short in chains, hard labour, and close imprisonment.

CHAPTER XIV.

Changes of Quarters—Peaceable Adventures—Failing Health—Back to England, and Discharge.

SUCH is a brief and necessarily imperfect narrative of the siege and capture of Bhurt-pore, an event on the great political importance of which, it would be ridiculous for me to hazard an opinion. One fact, however, is not only certain in itself, but was felt and acknowledged at the moment throughout the whole of India, namely, that there existed among the native powers a sort of superstitious conviction that Bhurt-pore would never yield to the force of British genius or British valour; and that

so long as Bhurtpore continued to assert its independance, a rallying point would still be left to the native chiefs, whenever they might make up their minds to rebel. That idle, yet not harmless delusion, the results of the siege in 1825, at once dispelled; and not till this day has the effect of so unlooked for a defeat ceased to operate upon the humbled spirits of all who witnessed it.

The siege being ended, and some of the principal fortifications blown up, one or two regiments of native infantry were left to complete the work of destruction; while the rest of the army drew off, and encamped at various points more or less distant from the trenches. Our encampment was not far removed from the citadel, nor had we occupied it long, ere a staff-officer came in and desired that a troop might attend him, in pursuit of two or three loads of treasure which were understood to have escaped. It so happened that my troop was the first

for duty; so away we went, carrying neither forage nor provisions along with us; and for two days and as many nights, our toil and privations were excessive. We penetrated through some tremendous passes, which a handful of resolute men might have held against an army, and more than once arrived at a village just in time to learn, that the treasure with its escort had passed some hours previously, and was gone, nobody could tell where. The result was that after having been reluctantly compelled to pillage several villages, and to make free with the people's fodder, we returned to camp not more rich than when we set out; and had little else to show as a memorial of our wild expedition than horses more or less blemished, and ourselves jaded wellnigh to death.

It was soon after the conclusion of this abortive excursion, that the deserter of whom I spoke a short time ago, was hung over one of the bastions, after which the

fortifications of the place were one after another thrown down. This done, the troops received orders to fall back towards their ancient stations, and we in obeying it had an opportunity of visiting several places of great and deserved repute among the people of Hindoostan. Among others we passed through Agra, where I beheld the superb tomb of the Shah Schan and his favourite wife, a structure so gorgeous, that any attempt to describe it even with the pencil would be preposterous. It stands upon a terrace confronting the river, the whole of which is paved in mosaic; and being itself composed entirely of beautiful white marble, offers, with its four minarets, and its noble stair of ascent, one of the most magnificent specimens of a very peculiar style of architecture that the imagination of man can conceive. Here too are the tombs of several ministers of state, scarcely less magnificent, though formed of different kinds of stone,

some being red, others of a darker colour; yet all strikingly beautiful. But I must not dwell upon subjects with which I feel myself inadequate to deal. Rather let me return to my own personal narrative, of which little more remains to be told; inasmuch as life in India to a private soldier has for the most part too much of sameness in it to sanction any endeavour on his part to draw out its details beyond the narrowest limits.

On the 12th of March, 1826, we resumed our old quarters at Cawnpore, through which not long after our arrival, passed the ex-rajah of Bhurtpore, on his way as a state prisoner to Calcutta. And here I am reluctantly compelled to acknowledge that a disposition to carry to a terrible excess all the vices that appertain to this country, showed itself in our regiment, and especially among the remains of the volunteers from the 8th. The habit, indeed, of drunken-

ness, became so confirmed among us that there was no making head against it; and frequent attempts at assassination, not always, I grieve to say, abortive, were the consequence. I cannot in terms sufficiently strong caution my brother soldiers against the folly, as well as the wickedness of yielding themselves up to so terrible a vice. Even if they be preserved from dipping their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures they are sure, under the influence of its madness to be hurried into actions which must cover them with shame, and entail on them long years of fruitless remorse. But I know by experience how little the experience of others is, by giddy young men apt to be regarded. I can, therefore, serve them in nothing more effectually, than by expressing my earnest wish that they may buy the one, if buy it they must, at a rate less ruinous than it has been my fortune to see it purchased

by others, whose prospects for the future were at one time bright as a morning in May.

If I except a visit which the Governor-general paid us, and the occurrence of a frightful fire, by which both barracks and stables were destroyed, there occurred throughout the remaining months of the year, nothing of which I consider it necessary to make mention. The fire in question cost us, I remember, a good many of our horses; for besides that, several perished ere we could get them clear of the burning pile; not a few scampered off into the heart of the country and never came back to us again. My own brute was a perfect devil, and chanced to be among the number of those, which, finding themselves momentarily free from bit and halter, tried to regain their liberty : but to my extreme mortification the monster was one day brought back. He was a perfect scarecrow when he came, and I

heartily regretted that I was ever so unfortunate as to see him again.

From Cawnpore we moved to Meerut, where, since we last occupied the station, the same accident had occurred which rendered ourselves, for a time, houseless. We were therefore agreeably surprised to find a range of new and commodious barracks thrown up for our reception. We made ourselves as comfortable in them as circumstances would allow, and became witnesses on one occasion, to such a fall of hailstones, as I at least, never beheld in any part of Europe. The blocks of ice, for they were nothing less, measured, many of them, a full inch in length ; and they fell with such violence, as not only to destroy the blossom and even the upper branches of the fruit trees, but seriously to injure the people that were abroad, and here and there to kill their cattle. I confess that as I gazed abroad upon the phenomenon, my thoughts reverted to the

account which Moses gives of a similar judgment inflicted on the Egyptians long ago: and I could not but feel, that had this continued many hours longer, there would have been little left for the locusts to glean, had supreme power determined that they should come to complete the ruin which the elements had begun.

Our life in India was not, however, entirely a strange intermixture of military duty, and dissipation, and shere idleness. We had, both at Meerut and elsewhere, our more rational amusements also. For example, while we lay at Meerut, Mr. Wolf, the well-known missionary, paid us a visit, and his discourses, for he preached to us by the commandant's permission, were, if not very edifying, at all events abundantly strange. He gave us a detailed account of his wanderings—of the persecutions to which he had been subjected, and of the fragments of the scat-

tered tribes which he had discovered in various places. Nay he was so imprudent as to venture into the field of prophecy itself, and to fix the year 1846, as that in which the restoration of Israel shall take place. We looked at one another, not knowing very well what to make of the speaker, so long as he confined himself to details like these. But when he proceeded to assure us that he had cast out devils, and to describe the very process by which the operation was carried through, we could not stand his palaver any longer. It is a rash thing in these days to assume the character either of a prophet, or a worker of miracles.

Again the country round Meerut abounding with game, we were permitted, from time to time, to go out in quest of it; and in parties of six or eight, we passed many a pleasant day, and even week in the jungle. But with me, as well as with many more, the

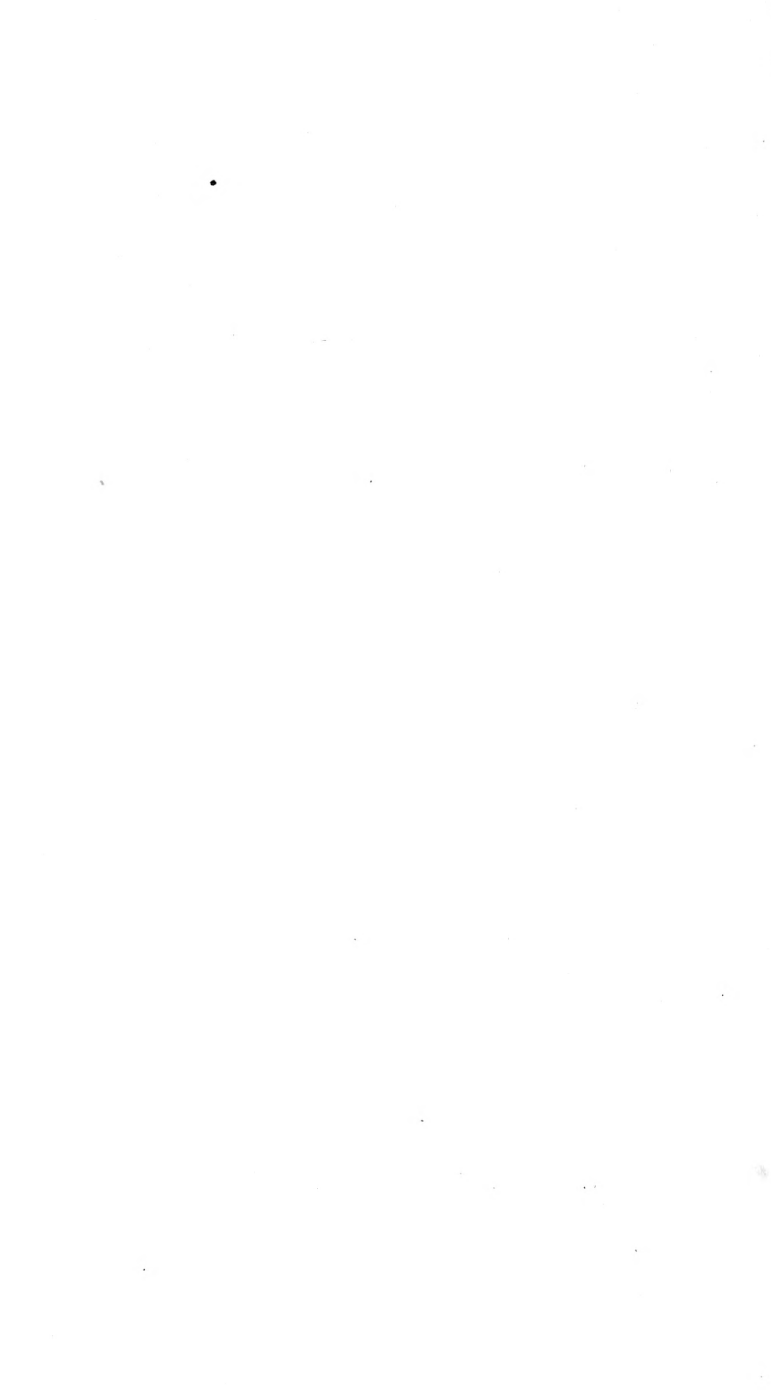
season of enjoyment passed rapidly away, and dilapidated constitutions, as well as great bodily weakness, warned us that it was high time to think of retirement, and of a preparation for another and a still more momentous change. Accordingly in the beginning of 1835 I applied for my discharge, and the necessary papers being made out, I began, in the month of February, in company with invalids from many other corps, my march towards Calcutta. It is not worth while to describe at length the particulars of that journey. It was not a pleasant one, for it was performed chiefly by water; and of invalids whom no officer looks after, even native boatmen take less care than they might do. Nevertheless, after suffering various inconveniences, we reached the capital of British India, just in time to learn that the last ship of the season had sailed. The consequence was, that

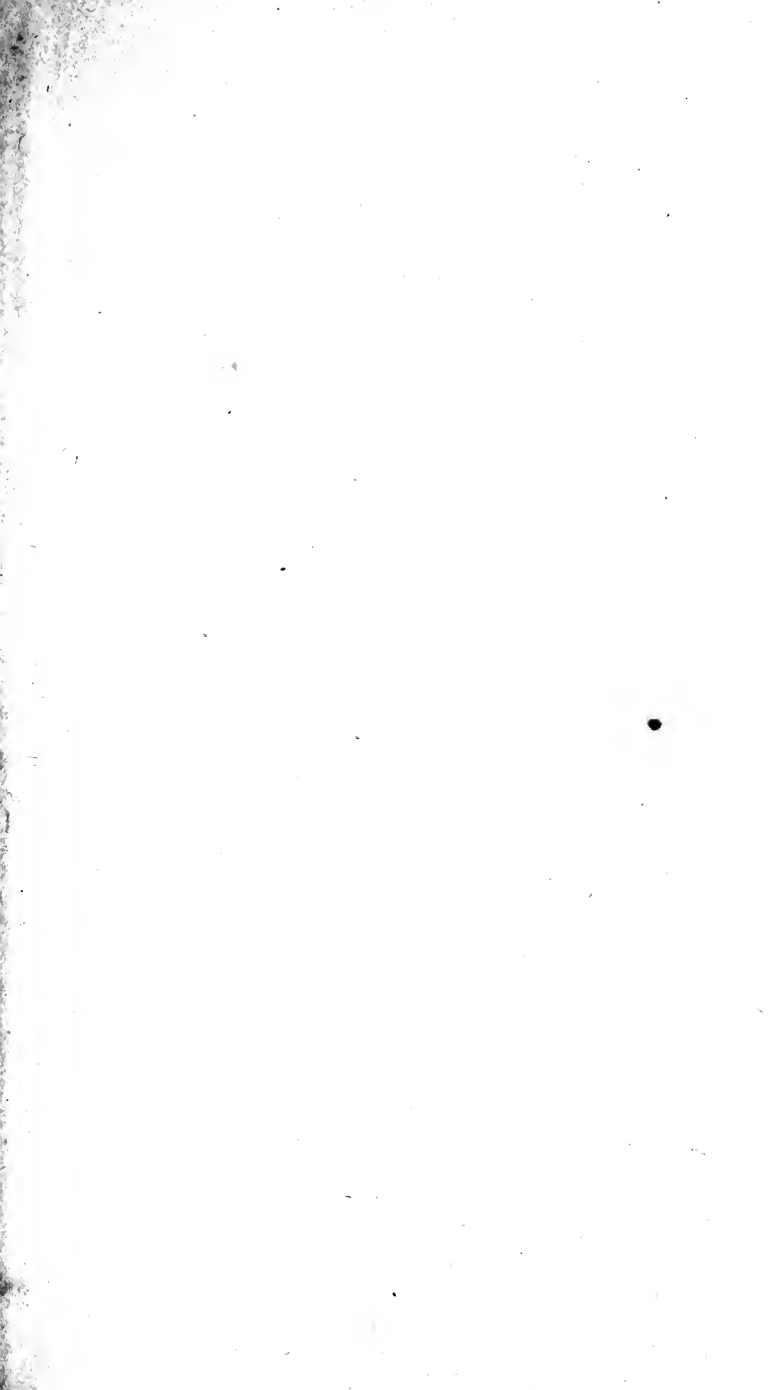
up to the month of January in 1836 we lingered amid the heat and squalor of Calcutta. Then, however, berths being found for us on board the teak-built ship the Hungerford, such of us as had survived the miseries of the last ten months embarked for England.

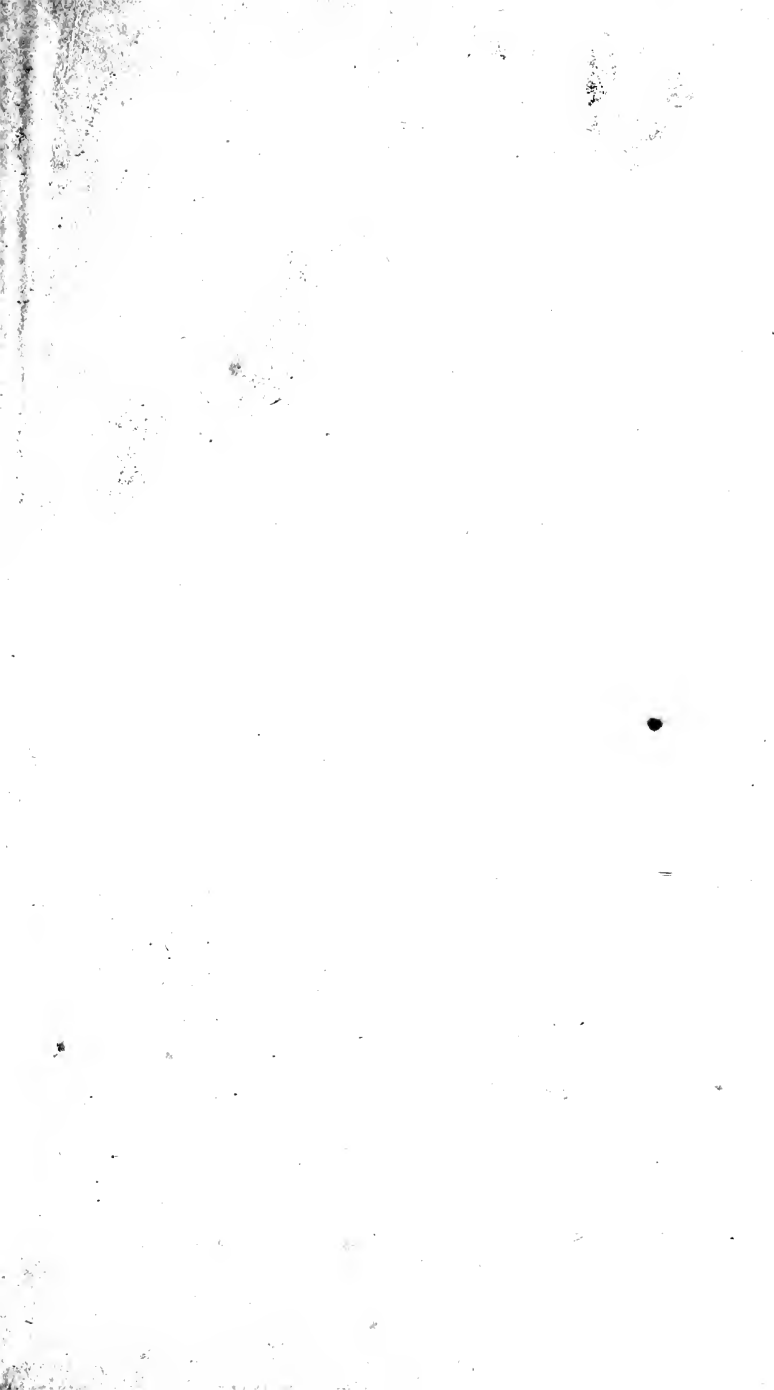
We had upon the whole a pleasant passage. Some trifling accidents occurred, such as the death of a man whom a shark devoured while bathing, and the loss of another who fell overboard; and we had our own share of enjoyments, especially when at anchor off the Cape, whence supplies of fresh provisions, wines, and vegetables were brought to us. But why continue these details? On the 25th of May we disembarked at Gravesend; from that place we marched to Chatham, and there, after an interval of three weeks I at length obtained my discharge. I cannot say that the remunera-

tion allotted to me was too great; for my pension, after so many years service, amounts only to tenpence a day, and I am by far too much worn out to add to it greatly by personal exertion.

THE END.







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